

THE ECLECTIC.

I.

JOHN LEIFCHILD.*

THIS is one of the most interesting and admirably executed pieces of religious and ministerial biography we have for a long time seen. Dr. Leifchild deserved a monument, and he has a good one. The compiler has very dexterously woven together his personal knowledge with the numerous autobiographical memoranda. A most affectionate and filial hand is visible through the whole volume, and we presume there are few readers who will be disposed to condemn the author if reverence and affection may sometimes seem to give too partial a lustre to the painting. The volume is valuable on many accounts. As presenting a model of pastoral and ministerial power, we scarcely know where, in our immediate circle, we should find its companion, for eminent ministers have seldom been fortunate in their biographers. The personal reminiscences of the patriarch preacher are very interesting; and we have conceived that, of some very eminent men with whom it was his happiness to meet, centres of opinion and action in their day, we have derived from them some of the clearest and steadiest illustrations of character. When we mention that among his personal and intimate friends at various periods of his life were William Wilberforce, Rowland Hill, Robert Hall, John Foster, and Joseph Hughes, and that their sayings and glimpses of their personality are vividly re-

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- * 1. *John Leifchild, D.D., his Public Ministry, Private Usefulness, and Personal Characteristics. Founded upon an Autobiography.* By J. R. Leifchild, A.M. Jackson, Walford, & Hodder.
2. *A Selection of Remarkable Facts of a Providential and Religious Character, illustrative and confirmatory of different portions of Scripture.* By the Rev. J. Leitchild, D.D. Ward & Co.

corded with reflecting side-lights also upon such opposite beings as William Huntingdon and Hannah More, we suppose our readers will be likely to unite with us in the impression as to the probability of the volume being an interesting one.

Eighty-three years have gone by since John Leifchild was born at Barnet, in Hertfordshire. He was entirely a self-made man. His parents seem to have been lowly but thoroughly respectable. His mother, indeed, was the daughter of a painter, who must have had some eminence in his day, since some of his pictures are still preserved in the rooms first visited in Hampton Court Palace. His name was Bockman. It comes out, indeed, in the story, that the union was scarcely a congenial one: Miss Bockman had been very genteelly brought up, and the incongruity between her maidenly and her matronly lot seems to have been productive of some uneasiness, which even the children witnessed; but both parents were religious. The mother, however, being of a saturnine and melancholy temperament, leaned to Calvinism, and relished the ministry of Mr. Romaine: the father, a sanguine, cheerful soul, was a Wesleyan Methodist. The subject of our memoir, as most of our readers well know, combined in his effective teaching the happiest excellences of both systems—the vertebræ of Calvin, the vitality of Methodism. A pretty little incident happened when he was a child. John Wesley, then in the most venerable period of his fame, perhaps, verging to the octogenarian, came to preach in the little chapel at Barnet; his carriage drove up to the house of Mr. Leifchild, and as he stepped from it the little John ran forward to lay hold upon the old man. The father pulled him back, but the saintly preacher extended his hand, exclaiming, surely with a visible propriety, ‘Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven’! Under such circumstances the language can scarcely be regarded as bordering upon presumption. He heard Mr. Wesley preach, and he thought the sermon the best he had ever heard; but there was a most modifying reason for this: it was only a quarter of an hour long. The recollections of the early Barnet days are very lively and pleasing: escapes from dangers on the road and dangers of the sick-bed. There must have been, too, round that first household, a vital religious atmosphere. The neighbourhood at that time, Finchley Common, was infested by highwaymen, and one evening, perhaps many years before the birth of John Leifchild, his grandfather was returning from London to Barnet, accompanied by his son, the father of the future preacher, but the father was then a mere lad. They were driving over the loneliest part of the common, which had an ugly reputation in

connection with the gentlemen of the road, when the old man said, 'Now, child, let us sing Ottford ;' but before the first strain of the tune could be raised, an unmusical voice thundered, 'Stop !' and an outstretched arm directed a pistol to grandfather's head. At that moment another vehicle was heard close behind, and came up before the robber could well ride off. 'There, my child,' said the grandfather, 'God has appeared for us ; now let us sing Ottford.' And so Ottford was gratefully sung and repeated while they whirled into Barnet. The father of John Leifchild seems to have been a remarkable compound, according to the testimony of these pages, of exalted piety, childlike simplicity, and facile credulity. He was himself a good preacher, an honest tradesman ; like his eminent son, always singing psalms and hymns. He was a man of undoubted probity, and a believer in all sorts of queer ghost-stories ; and to his honour shall it be said, that if his faith was very simple, there are illustrations in the volume that he was prepared to act upon his faith. John Leifchild the younger was apprenticed at St. Albans, where he united himself religiously with the Methodists. His occupation seems to have been that of a cooper. With his son he visited the charming old village town in 1858, but found every locality changed. Sixty years had passed away since he moved there, an obscure and noteless lad. Before he left the town he married his first wife, the wife of a year. The old man walked to the house where his first wife had lived, pointed out the door in the garden wall where she used to admit him in order that he might walk and talk with her in the evening. In that visit he lived over again, for a brief period, his youth. In many particulars we, too, are carried back by the stories of this old-world period. A dash of ghostly belief seems to have been possessed by more than one of the Doctor's relatives.

'Our family was not without its tales of wonder and superstition. My grandfather's credulity has already been mentioned ; and one of his daughters could a tale unfold that would enthrall the young, if it only amused the old. One of his sisters, also, was a believer in ghosts and ghost-lore, and could narrate a tale which she solemnly declared to be a true history. This shall be related in my father's words, as it happened in his St. Albans period.

"I give an account of an occurrence which soon after befel my aunt, for the truth of which, as an event, I can vouch, but of which I can offer no solution. She was standing in a little shop fronting the street, while a customer was being served. On a sudden her absent son passed in the street before her, and as he passed gave her a look of recognition, which so surprised and overjoyed her,

that, forgetting everything else, she rushed into the street after him. When there she could not see him, and concluded that he had gone to the alley which led to the Abbey" (my father pointed this out to me, and the place of apparition), "and meant to hide himself awhile. We all went, as soon as we could assemble, in search of him, but could not discover any trace of the son. My aunt then concluded that she had seen his spirit, and fell seriously ill. I noted the circumstances in writing at the time, and pondered over them.

"A few weeks afterwards my father came to see us, and my aunt truly divined his errand. He had received a letter from the captain of the ship in which her son was sailing, stating that the unfortunate lad had fallen from the mast and fractured his skull. While lying on his death-bed he directed the captain to write to my father, whose address he named. The dates of this misfortune and of her hallucination corresponded precisely. The deceased was a clever, amiable, and handsome youth, and his mother never completely recovered her animation after his death."

He removed to London, there uniting himself with the Methodists, with whom it seemed likely his religious lot in life would be cast. He was received as one of their local preachers. He heard frequently and enjoyed the friendship of Jabez Bunting, Mr. Benson, and Dr. Adam Clarke. Sometimes he numbered Mr. Bunting amongst his hearers; and although presently their paths diverged, their friendship continued till the close of the career of the eminent conservator of Methodism; when considerably more than half a century from the time when they dissolved their more immediate relationship, Dr. Leifchild preached the funeral sermon over the coffin of his ancient friend in the City Road Chapel, the chapel reared upon the site of that more primitive building where he had worshipped when he first came to London, and near which his first pulpit efforts were made. He entered Hoxton Academy in 1804. He appears to have been a favourite with his tutors; and it is a real pleasure to see that his religious convictions and creed were wrought out by himself. As a consequence he was too Arminian for the Calvinists, and too Calvinistic for the Arminians; but his success seems to have early commenced, his power of convicting consciences and bringing character to a stand. So early in his ministry we find he was the means of introducing Thomas Spencer to his wonderful and too ephemeral labours. Here is the incident:—

"When I was at Hoxton I was preaching at a chapel in Hertford, and there delivered a sermon from Psalm xxiii. 1. It had numerous heads and subdivisions, and upon them I examined some of the hearers at their own homes. While so engaged, I was

informed of a youth who could give me a particular account of them all. He was sent for, and soon appeared—a mere boy, with a ruddy countenance and fair hair. Upon my requesting him to repeat what he recollected of my discourse, with much modesty, but equal promptitude, he began and went through my sermon with such accuracy, exactitude of word, and imitation of my tone and manner, that I was amazed—his name was Thomas Spencer.

“I lost no time in mentioning him to Mr. Thomas Wilson, our treasurer, who took him under his patronage, and by his assistance he was placed in business with a glover in Cheapside. Soon afterwards he became a student for the ministry at Hoxton Academy, when I was completing its curriculum. He astonished us all by his facility in remembering and repeating sermons, and pleased us by his fondness for writers of the old divinity school, as well as by his interesting appearance. He was, indeed, an old divine with a young head. He composed sermons, but made little progress in classics or in general knowledge.”

We find that he did not disdain to receive lessons in elocution from the well-known lecturer Mr. True. The preacher always believed that he benefited by those lectures through life: no doubt he did, but such lessons are especially useful in the soil able to receive; some, we suppose, who received lessons with him, derived no such benefit. Once, while reciting Satan's Address to the Evil Spirits from 'Paradise Lost,' a stout student was enjoined to repeat the words, 'Princes, Potentates, Warriors,' in successively louder tones. He hardly needed the advice: the first word came out like distant thunder, the second like approaching thunder, the third like a terribly near and loud clap; at this last, the large house-dog Pompey, who had been asleep under the teacher's chair, started up and jumped out of the window into the garden. 'The dog is a good judge, sir,' mildly remarked Mr. True. The Doctor says, 'It may be difficult to credit the fact, but there were many witnesses to it, that on every following elocution day, Tuesdays and Fridays, when Mr. True made his appearance, no one could discover the dog anywhere.' Until he settled as a pastor, he attached himself to the old Weigh House Chapel, then under the ministry of the senior John Clayton. He mentions preaching for him once while a student, in the afternoon. Mrs. Clayton, an accomplished divine herself, was present, and took the youthful minister home in her carriage, and pleased him very much by saying that 'she could not find fault with a single word in the sermon.' This she qualified afterwards, rather to the youthful orator's chagrin, by admitting that 'she could not hear a single word.' She was in fact quite deaf excepting when riding in a carriage over stones in public streets. Mr. Leif-

child had several invitations to other careers than that which first commanded his energies at Kensington. Rowland Hill desired him for his Wotton-under-Edge curate, which would have given him the position also of preacher many months in the year at Surrey Chapel, a call very honourably testifying to the estimate in which he was held, but we can quite see not at all likely to suit the determined individuality of the young preacher. His first intercourse with Mr. Hill does not present the old gentleman in the most charming light, and brings his reputation of drollery more prominently before us than anything else. He had heard that Mr. Leifchild was likely to settle at Kensington. In his letter to Thomas Wilson he describes the people there as 'a set of formal, stupid Presbyterians.' He writes, therefore, 'Is the young man at liberty? Do you think he would do for us? Could you let us have a taste of him next Tuesday evening at Surrey Chapel?' He was announced to preach without his knowledge, and Surrey Chapel in those days was perhaps rather a dreadful pulpit ordeal for a young preacher. But 'next Tuesday evening' came, and with it a large congregation at Surrey Chapel, and the preacher performed his part; but towards the close of his sermon he was surprised at a disposition to risibility in the congregation. This he dealt with by expressing his regret if he had said anything to create it, quoting Cowper:—

'Tis pitiful to court a grin
When you should woo a soul'—

and gravity was restored. Presently the risibility broke forth again, and as he could not discover the cause, he proceeded to hasten to the conclusion, when he discovered that Rowland Hill had quietly entered the organ-gallery behind the pulpit, 'and there,' says the preacher, 'was performing several antics, some expressive of assent, and some of dissent.' We can believe for our parts that with all these he might have been comparatively innocent: he unfortunately possessed a face which twitched all over with drollery, although he had so much gentlemanly and natural dignity. But the young John Leifchild and old Rowland Hill were not likely to understand one another very well. Mr. Leifchild's position too at that time would perhaps justify him in resenting what he not unnaturally considered as something more than impropriety. 'I was indignant,' he says, 'at his unseemly conduct, and when he came into the vestry and asked me to become his curate at Wotton-under-Edge, I told him I declined his offer, and was about to settle as minister at Kensington.' 'That reminds

me,' said he, 'of young men setting up in business before they have served their apprenticeship.' Then he proceeded to describe the qualities he wanted in his curate; said 'he had his eye upon one, but he is too much of a lady's preacher, no slapdash: you've not got too much,' continued he. But beneath all this we can conceive the young man to retain rather an irritated demeanour, and with an abrupt 'Good night' the humorous old gentleman went his way. Dr. Leifchild goes on to say, 'I thank God I have lived to the day when such antics are no longer tolerated in the pulpit.' But we scarcely know whether our age is more free than that. It is true, perhaps, we have neither a Huntingdon nor Matthew Wilkes, neither have we a William Jay. These humoristic studies must not be looked at too rebukefully. Dr. Leifchild was very true to his own nature, which essentially revolted against all humour and drollery in the pulpit; but these men were very true also to their natures, and the Church on both sides of the river testifies that they were not useless.

He settled at Kensington in the year 1808. He was then twenty-eight years of age. His principal supporter seems to have been a liberal Scotchman, whose income did not much exceed £50 per annum: his name was Duncan. Another of the managers was worth £20,000, and he was as niggardly as Duncan was generous. 'Here, Duncan,' said the wealthy man on the occasion of an important collection at the chapel, 'will you put this in the plate for me?' handing him two half-crowns. 'I will, sir,' replied Duncan, 'with my own guinea.' Another of the supporters of the church was a superannuated coachman of George III., John Saunders, who for thirty years contributed out of his limited income the sum of £30 annually to promote the preaching of the Gospel in the village of Kensington.

Mr. Leifchild soon became an eminent and useful man in Kensington. Frequently among his auditors was Mr. Wilberforce; and an interesting letter preserved in these pages bears honourable testimony to both of the men. Mr. Wilberforce at that time was at the height of his fame. It was near the period when he bore the banner of England to the grave of Pitt; and he was mingling familiarly with the nobles of the land; but he wrote to Mr. Leifchild, 'The closer I get to you, the better.' The following is a very characteristic and graphic sketch:—

"Mr. Wilberforce was an occasional attendant on my ministry at Kensington. He used to send for me to his house, to consult with me on particular subjects. I found him a most fidgety little man, doing several things at once; stooping down on his knees to seal a letter at the table, and talking all the while about household affairs

to Mrs. Wilberforce; sending out messages to the persons waiting in the hall; then apologizing to me, and requesting me to remind him what he had sent to me for. I wondered how he could get through the various concerns entrusted to him with the ability and success which distinguished him. I did not trouble him much, as I always hated dangling upon the great.”

Serjeant Talfourd was another of Mr. Leifchild's friends, and a frequent attendant upon his ministry. He founded and fostered the Kensington Bible Society, and advocated its claims in that day of its first origin. He was personally noticed, too, by the Dukes of Kent and Sussex. Complimenting him upon his speech at a meeting, the Duke of Sussex asked him where he preached at Kensington. The young and obscure Dissenting minister was flattered by the royal attention and interest, and a little off his guard in his reply. ‘I was induced,’ says he, ‘very improperly to say that we should feel honoured by his Royal Highness's presence.’ ‘Get a sermon,’ said the kindly Duke, ‘by my friend Dr. Collyer, for the Queen's Lying-in Hospital, and I will come.’ ‘But,’ says the minister in his note-book, ‘I thought better of it.’ And he elsewhere wrote, ‘I always hated dangling on the great.’ The story of Lord and Lady Molesworth, however, is painfully interesting. They were among his people at Hornton Street Chapel, and there were many such, without ‘dangling on the great,’ who were attracted by his gentlemanly bearing and manners to listen and to receive substantial benefit. He formed most various acquaintanceships. One lady, who had been a Unitarian, and had become a Quaker, to whom he was presenting the unsoundness of the Quaker views on the subject of inspiration, interrupted him by saying, ‘Pray, sir, don't unsettle me again. I've got some quiet in religious matters, and I wish to remain in it.’

Here, too, is a queer portrait of one of the Doctor's hearers, the Honourable Mrs. S—— :

‘She was an eccentric widow, well connected, and had been a stanch Churchwoman; and when we came to dwell next door, she marvelled by what odd chance such odd fish as a Dissenting parson and his wife should swim so near her. For some time she scrutinised us from her windows, and looked askance over the intervening garden wall. She appeared to approve of all she could discover, except some of my childish pranks (for in this house I was born). Yet she took wonderfully even to me after a time, and soon presented me with a small but sonorous drum, with which I sadly disturbed the peace of the neighbourhood. Other toys also followed, respecting the reception of which my mother felt some delicacy. Some of these I once reluctantly returned, on which occasion the kind but

eccentric lady thus addressed me: "Keep them, or I'll lick you." Need I add that I kept the toys? But these trifles had an object and an issue. Through the child she was approaching and approving the parents. She now began to converse with my father over the garden wall. "What is it you believe, you Dissenters?" inquired she. "Do you believe the Bible? Come, now, tell me plainly." This the Dissenter did, much to her satisfaction, and somewhat to her surprise. Finding that he really believed and faithfully expounded the Bible, she ventured one Sunday morning into the chapel. My father, according to his wont, concluded his sermon with an earnest and pointed exhortation to Christian activity and works of usefulness.

'The next morning Mrs. S. looked over the wall as my father was walking in his garden, and addressing him, exclaimed, "Leifchild, can I come in? I want to speak to you."

"Certainly, Mrs. S.," was the reply; and they were soon together in my father's parlour, when the following conversation took place, the lady commencing abruptly as follows:—

"Leifchild, I want a spade."

"A *spade*, madam!" exclaimed her neighbour, in astonishment.

"Yes—a spade," was the rejoinder.

"But, Mrs. S., your garden is always in good order."

"Nonsense! You know what I mean."

"Well, I will send the servant round with a spade."

"Nonsense! You know I do not mean that."

"Excuse me, Mrs. S.; I really do not know what you mean."

"Well, then, you frightened me yesterday by saying that very few were converted after fifty years of age, and I am now forty-nine. And then you spoke of the diligent husbandman, and said we must all set to work. Now, I mean to work, and that is why I want a spade."

"You shall have one, madam, and gladly, too. We have abundance of work, and shall be most thankful for your help."

'The lady became a regular attendant at the chapel, and a zealous though still eccentric co-operator in works of benevolence. She endured some persecution, in consequence, from her High-church friends, who, upon her going into company, sneeringly inquired whether she had really become a Methodist.'

Some men seem to be especially marked out as the agents in the working of special providences. Dr. Leifchild, as we have seen, even from his days at college, was one of this order of men. Here is one of these singular instances:—

"While supplying at Orange Street Chapel, where my ministry was made useful, I one day received an anonymous letter enclosing a one-pound note, and soliciting relief to the doubts of the writer respecting receiving the Lord's Supper at that place on the ground of a passage in the eleventh chapter of the first epistle to the

Corinthians. I wrote in reply (objecting, however, to the fee of the one-pound note) an exposition of that passage, which deprived it of its fearful aspect to timid believers. I posted it, as directed, for 'E. M., Post Office, Gerard Street, to be called for.' The writer was surprised that the answer never came.

"Some time afterwards she saw a friend, once in the same state of mind as herself, but now staying to partake of the ordinance. She sought to know how her friend had got rid of her doubts. 'In a strange way,' replied the friend; 'a letter with my initials came to me from the Post Office. It was written by Mr. Leifchild to some other person, but it scattered my fears to the winds, and here it is' (producing it). 'O,' said the inquirer, claiming it, 'that letter was for me.' Thus both ladies were benefited by the same letter."

On another occasion during his Kensington ministry, a sudden and wondrous obliviousness came over his mind with reference to one of his Sabbath sermons. He could not recollect that he had prepared to preach; he could not even remember the text of his prepared sermon. In perplexity he walked in Kensington Gardens, and he resolved to preach from a text which occurred to his mind, without attempting to recall what had been prepared, consequently without preparation, for it was the Sabbath morning: the text was, 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' He preached with great liberty. No notes remained of the sermon; but he remembers quoting the lines,—

'Beware of desperate steps: the darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away.'

In the audience was a man who had gone that morning to the Serpentine to drown himself in it. For this purpose he had filled his pockets with stones that he might sink at once; but he could not get out of sight: passengers disturbed him. He walked on to Kensington, determined to drown himself in the dusk of the evening. People were crowding into the chapel, and he thought, to pass the time, he would step in too. His attention was riveted by the sermon; the lines especially seemed pointed to him, and he abandoned his suicidal intentions.

In ministerial usefulness, in position and influence, Kensington seems to have been almost all that a minister could have desired. Even the quaint old glories of Holland House seem to have been opened by their magnificent owner to the Dissenting minister; but the time came, in 1824, when he had to depart thence to fill the second, which may be called the comparative sphere of his ministerial eminence; the third, the superlative period, he

was to attain six years later. In Kensington he had married, and the son's photograph of the marriage relationship and home is not less humorous than natural and probable. Dr. Leifchild's influence was considerable, his position eminent, his usefulness undoubted; but the account-books seem to have presented not a very satisfactory appearance. Indeed it is said that the two admirable parents agreed over the Bible, but differed over the account-book. Stern biographical truth compels the narrator to notice that his father was a good preacher, but a bad financier, and that he abhorred all figures but those of speech. He thought of his study and not of his kitchen, except at meal-times. He trusted in Providence, and relied upon the promises. She had to confront tradesmen who trusted no one, and who demanded other promises than those of Scripture. His biographer relates all these things with very humorous *naïveté*, and they probably furnish a key to the disposition to yield to an unsought invitation to Bristol. Such causes of ministerial removals are, we know, regarded by comfortable people with a considerable amount of holy indignation. How can ministers act beneath such base considerations? Unhappily it is not only true that the laws of nature will not suspend themselves with reference to any individual, but there are certain social laws which will not be suspended, even for eminent and useful ministers. We have often heard the truth pressed home upon the consideration, that ministers especially should walk by faith; and we know they should; but then unhappily tradespeople and landlords have a sad propensity to walk by sight, and ministerial removals will very frequently, we suppose, be traceable to those low considerations, in which continuance seems impossible with character. And so, from some such causes as these, dimly hinted but no doubt operating, Mr. Leifchild found himself the pastor of a noteworthy old chapel in Bridge Street, Bristol, in 1824. This carries the mind back to a very different state of things, both with reference to Dissent in general, and Bristol in particular. The fame of the London minister soon waited upon the Bristol one, although it was a queer chapel in that day in which the ministry commenced; and the biographer has brought out into considerable distinctness some of the quaint peculiarities. Here is a portrait of the old pew-opener:—

‘In a lower rank there was a personage of similar importance and antiquity, viz., the old pew-opener. A memorable man was he, wiry in body, spectacled and bewigged; in a sense not at all apostolic, “he used great plainness of speech,” for by long service he had earned the freedom of his tongue. Though devoted to my father he was rather put out by his popularity. The previous

minister had been soothing and quiet, and had made but slight demands, in any form, upon the old pew-opener. On my father's arrival, however, measures were changed as well as ministers, and the privileged official had now to run where he had lately walked, and what was equally painful, to be silent where he once talked. The new minister allowed no vestry criticisms, and reprimanded all vestry gossipers. After-chapel conversations being discouraged, the pew-opener was unconsulted, his opinion was no longer sought, and his verdict upon family matters no longer delivered.

'Enforced silence and increased speed he might have endured without a murmur, but his entire faculties were tasked to accommodate the increasing and thronging attendants at the chapel. "What do'e all come here for?" was his not unfrequent salutation to strangers who pressed upon him from behind, or claimed his attention before. The inconvenience to himself was great, for now he could scarcely wend his perilous way to the old brazen chandelier, as it hung with its multiform branches from the centre of the ceiling, and with its numerous bristling candles awaited his enkindling touch by the elevation of a long taper-topped rod.

'It was this old pew-opener's duty, on all occasions of periodical baptisms, to exercise a general fatherly superintendence over the waiting and wailing infants in the vestry of the chapel. Sometimes he stood *in loco parentis* for an absent father, and frequently he brought the babes out of the vestry in his long lean arms, while the fathers were waiting at the chapel door ready to receive their treasures and then to advance with them to the pulpit. On one such occasion he had gone back into the vestry, and while tarrying there, the minister, thinking the ordinance of baptism had terminated, was engaged in concluding the service; just as he was pronouncing the benediction the old pew-opener reappeared in the aisle of the chapel with another babe in his arms. Unable to repress his vexation, and glancing angrily at the minister through his spectacles, he audibly murmured, "Here's another of them; why couldn't you wait a minute?"'

Mr. Leifchild was minister at Bristol during a very interesting period of its history, social and religious. It was the period when the Catholic Emancipation Bill was agitating the nation, and he stood firm on the side of freedom. His ministerial neighbours, if we may use such a word, competitors in the great arena, were some of them immortal men, and many eminent—Robert Hall, John Foster, William Thorp, and Thomas Roberts; and as we have already intimated, the personal reminiscences of these are very entertaining. We must not loiter, and therefore present a few of the more striking illustrations. Here are

REMINISCENCES OF ROBERT HALL.

"He had an intimate knowledge of character, and sometimes described to me in a single sentence the exact character of individuals

whom we both knew. Hearing that Dr. Chalmers was about to visit Bristol, and was coming to hear him, he sent word that unless he assured him he would not be present that morning, he would not preach. He told me that he had once heard Dr. Chalmers at Leicester, and was so electrified that he then determined he would never preach before him. How afraid these great men are of one another!

“From similar reasons he declined attending ‘Association Meetings,’ where several ministers officiated before each other. ‘What is it, sir,’ said he, ‘but preaching for *a hat*?’—alluding, I suppose, to the fact that a hat is the prize in some games amongst the lower classes.”

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“We were present, together with several ministers, at the opening of Mr. Hare’s new chapel at Bedminster, on which occasion Dr. Chalmers preached the morning sermon. In the course of it he took occasion to commend ornamental building, and described most vividly the beauty of a landscape with its village spire pointing to heaven. When we all dined together afterwards, Dr. Chalmers was thanked for his ‘admirable discourse,’ to which Mr. Hall expressed only a qualified assent. Some of us who were near him pressed him to say what he really thought about the part on village spires, when he simply said, ‘Apocryphal, sir, apocryphal.’

“The preacher of the evening not being a favourite with Mr. Hall, he begged to be left to himself in the house. After a long service we returned, and I asked him if he did not feel weary of solitude. ‘No, sir,’ he replied, ‘I have been well occupied; I have read the whole of Dr. Watts’s Psalms and Hymns—quite through, sir,—every one of them, sir—a thing I have never done before, nor ever thought of doing—every one of them, sir, I assure you.’

“He observed, respecting a sermon preached by a Baptist minister at Broadmead Chapel on the discouraging signs, and then the encouraging ones in the present condition of Christianity in this country, that it reminded him of a man driving two pigs to market, when one every now and then got behind the other, until the man whipping them up alternately brought them both in together to market.”

“A friend of my father’s and of Mr. Hall communicated the following observations to the former.

“These were his observations on three sermons which he and I heard many years ago:—

““Well, Mr. Hall, what did you think of the first sermon, the morning one?’ His reply was, ‘Horrid, sir, horrid; very much like death upon a mopstick.’

““But you surely don’t think so of the second sermon?’

““Very tame, sir, very tame, indeed; very much like the chirping of a sparrow in Windsor Forest.’

““But what do you say of Mr. Fuller’s sermon, sir?’

““ O, he embowelled the text and showed us all that was in it.””

““ He could be blunt, and almost insulting. A Baptist minister of Bristol, who had travelled with him in Wales, where they had heard Christmas Evans (a celebrated Welsh preacher), was listening to Mr. Hall’s vivid description of the power of that extraordinary man’s address, appearance, and preaching. ‘But, sir,’ observed his companion, ‘you remember that he had but one eye.’ ‘One eye, sir,’ exclaimed Mr. Hall, ‘why, sir, if I had a thousand such eyes as yours I would give them all for that one.’””

““ Shortly after Mr. Hall’s settlement at Bristol, I accompanied him to an ordination service at a chapel at Wells, Somersetshire. As far as I can recollect I was to give ‘The Charge’ to the minister, and he was to preach to the people in the evening. Although I had gone with him on several ministerial excursions, and had preached before him, I had not then acquired full confidence in his disposition to hear me candidly and considerately; I therefore contrived to leave him either at the inn, or in a friend’s house, and I remember that I strictly charged the landlady or hostess not to awake him or disturb him, for he had fallen fast asleep, either from the fatigues of the journey or the effects of opium which he was compelled to take to mitigate his sufferings.

““ On rising in the pulpit to commence my charge to the minister, I felt relieved at the absence of Mr. Hall as a hearer; but had scarcely proceeded to speak before I espied Mr. Hall directly before me, in his usual reclining posture, looking up at me with great attention and apparent expectation. ‘Did you think, sir,’ said he afterwards, ‘that I was to be detained by any woman? No, no, sir, I soon woke up, and hastened after you.’””

“As relates to my father, it may be doubted if he ever met with a man of such acknowledged power of mind with whom he felt equally congenial. They were one in heart and hope; they travelled and preached together at anniversaries and ordinations, and they held long and animated conversations in friends’ houses, in their own dwellings, in vestries and in vehicles. In several of their journeys I accompanied them. I rode with them from Bristol to Wells, and can now in imagination see Mr. Hall smoking and reclining on one seat of the carriage while my father sat on the other. I can see Mr. Hall descending at a blacksmith’s shop to re-light his pipe, making his way directly to the forge, and jumping aside with unwonted agility when a huge dog growled at him. I can recall his look when rallied on his agility, after his return to the carriage. “You seemed afraid of the dog, sir,” said my father. “Apostolic advice, sir, ‘Beware of dogs,’” rejoined Mr. Hall.”

These illustrations are very interesting. If they do not add to our impressions of Mr. Hall, yet they do add to the number

of those brusque, happy conversationalisms of which it seems we cannot have too many. Another remarkable friend of whom we are always only too glad to hear, and round whom some pleasing side-lights shine in these pages, is the recluse at Milton Cottage, the severe and fearful mental anatomist, John Foster. Of him also several very illustrative and characteristic circumstances are related, and the estimate by the biographer of the minds of his father and the essayist in contrast and comparison is very effective. In creed they were very nearly alike, but their mental habits—one might almost say their moral habits—were very opposite. Activity and reflectiveness are the two words in which he sums their characters. The following present this extraordinary man in a remarkable light:—

REMINISCENCES OF JOHN FOSTER.

‘I remember, too, hearing while at Bristol, that in one of his village sermons, near his own residence, he described a well-known old tree, spreading over the road which he and his congregation had passed; first naturally, and then in relation to the thoughts which might have been entertained, and the actions which might have been performed, by men passing or pausing under its branches. This he did so graphically that one of his hearers, an aged peasant, declared he had passed by that tree for forty or fifty years, and never “given it a thought;” but that Mr. Foster had now made so much of it, that he should never pass it again at night without fear. Particularly, the preacher had dwelt upon crimes which might have been meditated and possibly committed in the darkness under that umbrageous giant—and I think he had depicted a murderer as maturing his horrible purpose on that spot. Certainly the old villager was profoundly impressed, and affirmed that he never thought any person could preach like that about an old tree; and that for his part, though he didn’t believe one half of it, yet he should always go home by another road at night.’

* * * * *

“Mr. Foster indulged more in sarcasm than verbal wit. He once called the world ‘an untamed and untameable animal,’ and on being reminded that he was part of it, and therefore had an interest in its welfare, rejoined, ‘Yes, sir, a hair upon the tail.’ On insincerity, affectation, and cant, he was unsparingly sarcastic. Some years ago, the Emperor Alexander’s piety was a favourite theme at public meetings. A person who received the statements on this point with, as Foster thought, a far too easy faith, remarked to him, ‘that really the Emperor must be a very good man!’ ‘Yes, sir,’ he replied gravely, but with a significant glance, ‘a *very* good man—very devout—no doubt he said grace before he swallowed Poland!’”

* * * * *

“Mr. Foster’s impatience of the limits of human knowledge

respecting the other world, made him desirous to converse with some spiritual visitor, and of learning what such an one could disclose. When he was descending Snowdon, during a tour in North Wales, with his friend Mr. Stokes, of Worcester, he stooped and looked over down to a deep valley. When his friend came up with him he was leaning forward with evident abstraction of mind. 'O, sir,' exclaimed Foster, 'look down there; look down there, sir; there's a leap, sir—one leap, sir—a bold leap, and in one moment I should know the grand secret!' His friend was terrified at his wild look, and humbly entreated him to draw back from the edge of the precipice, which Foster did with reluctance." (The same friend mentioned the circumstance to my father).'

In Bristol he was eminently useful. The pervading power of his indefatigable Christian activity covered a large field. He was ready for all work, and he was equal to all work he undertook. Upon the occasion of the execution of three youths belonging to a gang of a desperate character, in the extraordinary excitement Robert Hall was requested to preach to the multitude upon the field of execution. Those who requested him to do so could have known him but very slightly. He was indeed every way, alike by his intensely sensitive and physically weak temperament of body, unfit to command himself in such a scene; but he sent for Mr. Leifchild and entreated him to go, and the sheriff's permission was obtained; and when the bodies were cut down he ascended the platform and preached beneath the ropes dangling in the air. No wonder he says he was appalled, but he preached, and preached amidst the sobs and exclamations of the audience, the vast sea of upturned faces. The preacher and Mr. Hall returned to Bristol together. Mr. Hall was wondrously affected, tears stood in his eyes, and he said with much emotion, 'Sir, I envy you the honour God has put upon you this day. Sir, I would give all I possess to have had the privilege of delivering such an address;' and it was known that some did forsake their evil courses and turn to the Lord.

Some of the experiences of Bristol were of another order. The following incident is graphically told in the 'Selection of Remarkable Facts:—

'Many years ago I visited an aged woman in the city of Bristol, at the request of her son, who was a man in decent circumstances. He told me that his mother had been a constant attendant on my ministry; but was now very aged and infirm, and at the point of death. It was the afternoon of the day when I reached her house, which was at some distance from my own. Following my guide, I ascended to the topmost room, and found it meanly

furnished, and so far from cleanly, as to render it unpleasant *for me* to remain. I saw lying on a bed before me, an aged female, with her grey hair matted about her head, her eyes dim with age and disease, and her whole appearance most painful and repulsive. "Mother," said her son, "I have brought a gentleman to see you."—"Who is it?" she mumbled, "I don't know anybody, and can hardly see at all." "I thought," said I, turning to the son, "that she would not know me." At the sound of my voice, she started, and aroused herself, saying, "Oh! yes, but I do. Ah! you are the gem'man that I ha' walked so many a weary mile to listen to, and after my walk on my old legs, I had always to stand in the aisles as you call 'em, for want of room; but I didn't mind. Oh, often's the time when I waited to pull you by the sleeve as you came down from the pulpit and passed me, that I might tell you how I *loved you for talking so much about my old friends and acquaintances!*" "Your old friends and acquaintances," I inquired, "whom do you mean? You and your friends are quite strangers to me." "Why, I mean," said she, "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and them like. Dear me, didn't you often tell me how that good old man walked with God, when he went out, not knowing where he was going to? And how poor old Jacob lost his son—dear Joseph? They bound him fast in the prison, and the iron entered into his soul; and," continued she, as if talking to herself, "I've got a Joseph. He's far away from me, and I shall see him no more, but I shall leave him this book" (a large folio Bible, which had been purchased in separate parts, and which was lying before her), "I bought it for him a long while ago. I have got no other book, only 'the Holy War,' them be all I ever had; but him (directing her attention to the Bible), I'll give him; he'll find it wetted in many places with his old mother's tears. Ah! don't you r-remember," she continued, "that poor dear creature who went into the house after Him, and stood at his feet, and washed 'em with her tears, and wiped 'em with her hair? I got no hair to wipe 'em, but I could wash 'em with tears too, and they'd not be tears of grief—no, but of love, like hers was, for he said to her—oh! did not his dear lips say to her—Your many sins be all forgiven you; and has not he forgiven mine, quite as many as hers? and don't I love him?" Then the big tears rolled down her furrowed cheeks, and her strong emotions almost choked her utterance, while her hands were clasped together and lifted up, as if she would have embraced something which she alone could see. So graphic were her descriptions, and so animated was her manner, that I stood beside her listening, as it were entranced—and unmindful of all around me that had seemed unsightly and unpleasant.

"The son had quitted the chamber and left us alone; but she, as if heedless of the presence of any one, and occupied with her own musings, went on, and once or twice spoke as if she saw before her the very individuals about whom she was conversing. "Yes," she exclaimed, "the ill-natured Pharisee—(ah! them be aways ill-

natured to poor folks and sinners like me)—huffed her, and said, if the Master knew her, he wouldn't ha' let her come so near him,—wouldn't he? Ah, *he* didn't know Him, bless his dear lips and his tender loving heart. No, says he, she has much forgiven her; and didn't he look into her heart, and tell her to go in peace? Why, they put him between two thieves! they thought to disgrace him; but he took one on 'em to heaven with him!—didn't he make a jewel of him? Ah, and he can make me one of his jewels! But la, sir," said she, just then recognising my presence, "how I ha' been talking, and *you* here, who I've so wanted to hear talk again. Oh, do tell me more about my friends and acquaintances,—(meaning the Old Testament saints)—for I think about them all day and night, and I go about with them and hear all their tales, and see how they wept, and how they prayed; and I see the angels, too, coming and talking to them, and then I talk to them, and they to me. And I thinks it'll not be long before I do talk to them *really*." So she went on till, having to attend an evening service, I reluctantly left the room, promising to see her the next day. My mind was so full of the images and personages she had conjured up before me, that they formed the whole matter of my address that evening; and at the close I told the friends who composed my audience what I had seen and heard. Some pious females requested the address of the aged saint, and repaired early the next morning to her humble abode.

"Ladies," said the person whom they saw, "she scarcely spoke after the gentleman left her, but folded her hands upon her breast, and died in the night."

'She was not, for God took her. In her lowly path she had walked with God, conversed with the angels, and held intercourse with the spirits of just men made perfect, for whose holy society she was, as far as man can judge, prepared far above many of her superiors in gifts and privileges.'

After six years' ministry in Bristol, Mr. Leifchild accepted the invitation to Craven Chapel, in London, although his best friends were quite adverse to his removal: Robert Hall, John Foster, and William Jay, all disapproved. Hall said, 'What do you want, sir? your people love you, your chapel is full, the city respects you, your brethren love you. What on earth do you want, sir? London! London! You'll be popular there for a year or two, and then neglected. Here they'll cleave to you to the last, and cherish your memory, and your son after you are gone. In London they'll soon forget you and yours.' Other friends gave the same advice; and it might well be supposed to be very sound, for London has no congregation; a floating, fluctuating mass, rolling through Vanity Fair, well describes such an audience; uncertain, unkindly, critical, unfixed. Only a man with a lion heart should face the great city; but John

Leifchild had a lion heart. Moreover, he had the appearance as of the mane and the majesty of the lion. He was fifty years of age when he became the minister of Craven. He had a large measure of experience, and he was fitted by all the qualities of his mind for power over a vast audience. In what is usually regarded as pulpit oratory he was the most effective master in London. He assailed the conscience, and chained it, and carried it away captive. He was practical in all his sermons, and this was so eminently the study of all his preparations that men could not rise after hearing him exactly in the same moral relation in which they had sat down. He prepared his sermons with a close, compacting resolution of every part; nay, he embodied the method of his discourse by the following quaint, wise hints, which all preachers will do well to remember:—

‘Begin low,
Proceed slow,
Take fire,
Rise higher,
Be self-possessed
When most impressed.’

He says, ‘From the first I determined to be a good preacher, and I have never seriously aimed at anything else all my life.’ We do most cordially commend to ministers his account of his own pulpit preparation. To many it may seem that it was too slavish. In reply, let it be said he was a preacher; being a preacher, he lived for the pulpit, and he succeeded eminently in that for which he lived; the flash of lightning which there lit up the sermon as it proceeded on its way, then the more quiet and orderly discoursing, and then the carefully wrought and prepared peroration, pathos and solemnity, fervour and fire, arresting, thrilling, melting, rolling over and subduing every heart, but especially the impenitent heart. Mr. Leifchild says,—

‘The perorations of his sermons, however, demand special notice, as they certainly formed their most distinguishing features. In these, argument seemed no longer to drag its slow length along, but shone in fast and fiery lines. Logic, usually hard and severe, suddenly glowed in red heat, and the long-dead letter of Scripture became lustrous in the dark places of your heart. There was no escape for you in generalities. Down there, indeed, in the midst of the densely seated multitude, no one knew or heeded you; or yonder up there, in the seven-pewed galleries, you were but one in a mountain of heads. But as you looked up to the pulpit, and listened to the impassioned speaker, you felt yourself individualised—singled out and insulated from the vast mass of your crowding neighbours. *You*, perhaps,

were the impenitent person then being so severely denounced. *You* were the sinner then so pitilessly exposed. *You* were the man or woman who did that dark deed in years long gone by ; and now you stand before the judgment-seat, to behold your vileness, to listen to your exposure, and to receive your doom. *Your* sin, your particular sin, has found you out, in this very chapel, at this very hour, and by the lips of that dauntless denouncer. *You* have trifled life away ; you have laughed through the hours of a long but disregarded responsibility ; and there you now stand face to face with the Judge of all—the Judge of both small and great !’

And the effect of this was often very visible. Young men came into the chapel, and they testify they nearly rose from the seat beneath the powerful word, scarce able to contain themselves. The preacher had addressed them as if he had known their whole history. Possessed of a very fine instinctive nature, he had more and used more of the artist faculty than might be supposed. He knew exactly how much colouring to use, and meretricious charms and adornments were far away usually from his taste and his style. He rarely used illustration : his preaching was direct and immediate. His biographer very truly says, that ‘oratory resides partly in the audience.’ Many a preacher would be quite unequal to his opportunity if placed before a large audience ; but then it is also true that many men quite equal to the opportunity never have it before them. Our preacher was fitted for a mass of people, and he always saw a gathering throng of some two thousand persons before him ; and thus he built up the noble, spiritual temple in his new chapel, ‘providing sentiment for all hearts on the Sundays, and work for all hands on other days.’ No doubt he studied to give effect to all the parts of his work. He was sufficiently wise to devote attention to the singing, especially the last hymn. ‘The singing of that last hymn at Craven Chapel, on some occasions,’ one writer testifies, ‘was a thing to be remembered through life.’ He guarded the family constituency of his congregation, and pew after pew along the spacious lines of pews below, and ‘pew after pew amidst the rising galleries above, had its *pater familias* at one end and its *mater familias* at the other, and successively graduated little heads numerous interposed.’ These are the congregations we long to see. Such as these give power to a man ; they gave power, and now the permanence of that power is felt in affectionate memories which wait on the venerable man. After a pastorate of twenty-three years, he preached his farewell sermon at Craven Chapel, and he testified, when a very handsome testimonial was presented to him, that ‘I never once, through the whole of these

three-and-twenty years, preached an unstudied sermon in that pulpit, though this has often cost me sleepless Saturday nights, and made me feel the ministry to be indeed the burden of the Lord.' He retired to Brighton, and for some time held the pastorate of the new Queen Square Chapel, according to Mr. Leifchild a very uncomfortable place. We, who have sometimes ourselves been in the building, do not think it quite so sad an affair as he has represented it. We should think the step was ill-advised. The Brighton chapel was not so large as Craven, but it was a large chapel, and it needed a hand more firm and a voice more equal than that of the beloved and honoured octogenarian. He was of course successful, but it was a sad year. His aged wife died at the advanced period of seventy-seven, and he once more returned to London. Some of the words in which the biographer reviews the scenes at Brighton are painfully pensive. He especially alludes to the old man's intense love of singing psalms and hymns; and the following scenes are both vivid and suggestive of very sympathetic feelings:—

'Some of these we three have often sung together with one heart. Last of all, we have sometimes looked out together from our window at Brighton, and watched the unclouded sun slowly descending upon the burnished level of the sea, and shedding a fiery radiance far over the trembling waters. Then, each taking a suitable part, we have chanted the following:—

"God of the sunlight hours, how sad
Would evening shadows be;
Or night in deeper shadows clad,
If aught were dark to thee!

"How mournfully that golden gleam
Would touch the thoughtful heart,
If with its soft retiring beam
We saw thy love depart.

"But no; the gathering clouds may hide
Those gentle rays awhile;
Yet they who in thy love abide
Shall share again thy smile.

"Yea, let creation's volume close,
Though every page be bright;
On thine, still open, we repose
With more intense delight.

"Thence through the gloom of mortal things
Thy mercy can disclose
More love than many an angel sings,
For many a sinner's woes."

'Touching and appropriate as this hymn always seemed when so

sung, never more could my father and I manage to sing it through together when *her* voice was mute in death, who had often and long looked out upon creation's volume with us two, to one of whom she had given her heart, and to the other his life. Now the time for united singing was over for ever in this world. Death had broken a string in our family lyre. Nature, indeed, was still the same around us and before us. The same evening splendours were flung in fiery glory on the outspread deep; the glowing billows still rolled in sunny radiance before us; but I could never contrive to sing more than one verse of that hymn with the widower, in that place of gay resort to the multitude, but of sorrowful memories to us. I distinctly remember my failure one Sunday evening, as we *two* looked out again on the glowing waters of the sunlit ocean. My father began the hymn, and though his companion failed, sang it through, and found vent for *his* grief in the successive verses. I believe that in his ability and disposition still and ever to sing, lay one source of his relief, or at least of his ordinary cheerfulness. He sang in youth, in manhood, in the house, and in the church. He sang in sorrow as well as in joy; he sang in sickness as well as in health. In the prostration of disease and in the feebleness of his age he still attempted to sing.'

With beautiful and reverent art Mr. Leifchild has portrayed the last days of his father. Far advanced as he was in life, his mind and heart were alive. Some of his last words were, for so old a man, remarkable. At an ordination service he said, 'New types of thought sway successive ages, and a man to be successful now must have the types of thought that are the character of the present enlightened age; otherwise the ministry will sink behind in its rank of instructing mankind.' Wherever he went men called him blessed. It seemed as if some were in waiting for him everywhere, to whom he had been useful; and still true to his Master and himself, he never missed an opportunity of laying a finger on the conscience, or of exalting the Saviour. Sometimes we ourselves had the opportunity of meeting him, and were always impressed by the saintly consistency of the venerable man. Many of his last words were remarkable. 'It is a great thing to be able to go out of this world into the other, fearless of meeting *any* spirit there.' His son placed his hand in his: he feebly grasped it and said, 'May that hand ever receive the same Divine help that this one has received.' Shortly before his death he said, 'So many hymns crowd on my mind, that I find it difficult to avoid confusion.' On Sunday, June 29th, it was evident his end was close at hand. Broken sentences of peace and joy came from him at intervals.

'To his niece he said, "What! don't you hear it? don't you hear it?—those beautiful harps!" And then, as if losing all cognizance

of this world, he added, in soliloquy, "You can't all go in with me. I must go first; but keep close behind me, and open the gates wide, wide, wide, for all."

His last words seems to have been, 'Good-bye, my son, I know that I shall meet you in heaven.'

'At night, while all in the house were standing around his bed, that great change took place which to the multitude is so insignificant, to the individual so momentous, to the spectators so solemn.'

'The hour and day of his death were as though designedly appropriate. The day was a Sabbath; the hour, its close. That time was the one which, for fifty years, had been the working-time of his ministry. That day had always been the source of his private anxiety and the time of his public triumphs. Most appropriately, therefore, did his life terminate on a Sabbath night. About the hour when he left this world, he had for many past years finished his public ministrations, and was usually relaxing his mind by social intercourse, either in his own house or in that of some chosen friend and family. For many years it was about this hour that he felt he had done his day's full duty, and might lawfully enjoy the intervening hour or two ere he went to rest; and now about the same hour he entered into his final rest, having finished the work which his Lord had given him to do. At this time, formerly, he had put off his pulpit-robes; at the same time, now, he put off the garment of his mortality. At this time, formerly, he had become a cherished guest in an earthly household; at the same time, now, he became a member of the heavenly family.'

He was buried in Abney Park Cemetery, within whose enclosures he had interred the first body twenty-three years before. Upon his tomb—it is his own epitaph—is an exclamation uttered not long before his death:—

'I will creep as well as I can to thy gates;
I will die at thy door; yea, I will be found
Dead on the threshold of thy mercy,
With the ring of that door in my hand.'

One thing Mr. Leifchild should surely have done in preparing this biography: he should have woven into the texture of his story most of the instances recorded in the 'Remarkable Facts.' They are so illustrative of the preacher's character, of his incessant occupation with the business of his life; they are so really related to his own history and the history of his usefulness; they are the illustrations of so many varieties of character touched by the life of the pastor and the preacher, or the Christian minister travelling, that the history is scarcely complete without them; and more especially their wise incorporation with the life would have been desirable,

as without some revision they can never receive now, their republication can scarcely be looked for. They have something of the charm of 'The Near and Heavenly Horizons,' not in the richness of descriptive fancy and colouring, but in the same immediate way, and possibly in a much more real way, more real because more simple. Without any of the aids of the poet's or the artist's effort, the reader is led to many of those real scenes in the history of souls which impart strength and light by furnishing the illustrations of the manifold ways in which human spirits have found peace in believing; and this volume especially manifests that leading characteristic of Dr. Leifchild's ministry, his determination to touch the conscience, his remarkable power of placing himself directly in contact with the consciences of his hearers. But he did this constantly not less in conversation than in the pulpit. But it is time we brought our notice of this interesting volume, the memorial of a most interesting and useful life, to a close. We trust it is already in the second edition, and that it will pass through many.

II.

THE ANTIQUITY OF MAN.*

A FRIEND of ours had a certain old country-house in which he and his forefathers had dwelt for many generations. It was large, roomy, substantial. There was even an air of grandeur about the old pile. The stormy winds and pelting rains of several centuries seemed to have no other effect upon it than to beautify it with the charms of a noble and steadfast old age. In fact, it served every purpose of a house, both to live in and to look at. One day an acquaintance of our friend, who lived in the capital, happened to visit this old-fashioned country-house. Accustomed as he was to the improvements of the city, it was scarcely to be expected that he would be quite satisfied with our friend's house. Indeed, it presently appeared that he was as dissatisfied as he well could be. The windows were too few and too small; the rooms were too low; the elevation was mean and paltry; the plan was faulty beyond expression. It

* *The Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man; with Remarks on Theories of the Origin of Species by Variation.* By Sir Charles Lyell, F.R.S. London: John Murray.

was nothing to him that the foundations were good, the walls substantial and thick, and the whole house what a house ought to be, thoroughly comfortable: nothing would do but that he must persuade our friend entirely to reconstruct his mansion in accordance with modern tastes and requirements. In an unlucky hour he consented, and in place of the old, time-worn, serviceable house, having, it is true, a few inconveniences, he has now a spick-and-span new building, by no means excellent in itself, utterly out of harmony with the surrounding scenery, and, compared with the old structure, as uncomfortable and as unhomelike as a jail.

Something very like this many of our clever and officious friends propose to do for the House of Faith, wherein we and our fathers have so comfortably dwelt for many centuries. The old house has suddenly been found out to be dull, dark, unsuitable, uncomfortable. It is hardly a place fit for dogs, much less for the lineal descendants of extinct gorillas and chimpanzees. Only just think! the library is so small that there is no room for even a fraction of German literature and its cognate branches. There is actually no museum, so indispensable in a modern mansion, where may be deposited broken flints, old bricks from the Nile mud, lower jaws, tibias and molars of bears, elephants, apes, and fossil men, rounded bits of bone that may be one, a thousand, or a million years old, for aught the possessor knows; no laboratory where it may be shown that life is the product of concurrent chemical atoms, and thought and feeling, wit, poetry, love, and worship, the result of muscular and nervous action. A house without these provisions is, nowadays, just no house at all; so we are counselled to pull down our old House of Faith, built up so solidly of Scripture fact and doctrine, and devout human ratiocination, and in its place erect a modern House of Science, built up of geological guesses, chemical formulæ, anatomical comparisons, grammatical and arithmetical criticisms. As if a soul could live in such a house as that!

This book of Sir C. Lyell's is evidently a demand that we should reconstruct our House of Belief, in so far as regards the doctrine of the origin and antiquity of man. We say the origin as well as the antiquity (though the latter only is mentioned on the title-page), because the latter part of the book does discuss somewhat lengthily the question of man's origin. We propose to inquire whether Sir C. Lyell really makes good his demand that we should pull down this part of our house.

On geological matters no one is more competent to speak than Sir C. Lyell. The authority of his name, merely, is enough to overpower any man who must only consider himself a layman

in geological science. But when we come to consider that this distinguished and clever man has travelled far and wide, and written innumerable letters, in order to deal properly with the important question of his book, it appears most vain and presumptuous for any less competent man than himself to deal with his theory and the evidence in support of the theory. It must further be conceded that the spirit of the book is most admirable. There is nothing offensive in its tone or statements; a most admirable candour marks it from beginning to end; and the excessive caution which it exhibits could only have been excelled by a withholding of the book altogether from publication until the theory had been wrought out into a more solid and consistent shape, and the evidence in support of it had been not only more voluminous, but more satisfactory in its quality. Still, it is well to have such books, written in such a spirit. They are all helpful to the attainment of the truth; a consummation devoutly to be wished, but no doubt a long way from being realized.

Sir Charles nowhere states his precise views of the matter. His method is rather to accumulate all the available evidence, and then to suggest what is the only reasonable conclusion from this evidence. If we try to put into some sort of form the argument of the book, as it may be conceived to exist in the writer's mind, it takes the following shape:—

(a) There are certain strata of rocks comprised in what are called the Post Tertiary series (these again being subdivided into Recent and Post Pliocene), which are of incalculable age. That they are so is proved by two lines of evidence: first, by comparison with observed rates of deposition of modern strata similar in origin and character; and second, by a consideration of the different movements of upheaval and subsidence, and the glacial drift to which these strata have been subject, all of which go to prove that the strata in question are of immense age. This we may consider the major premiss of the argument.

(b) The minor premiss is contained in the proposition, that in these strata are found, in very many different localities, and in different layers of strata in the same neighbourhood, so-called works of art, fossil remains of extinct fauna and flora, and, in conjunction with these, a few remains of man.

(c) The conclusion is, that these remains are as old as the strata in which they are found; therefore the race of man is of incalculable age. Connected with this, the main argument of the book, there is a subsidiary argument tending to the same conclusion. This subsidiary argument is an application of Mr. Darwin's now celebrated theory.

(d) Species originate by variation and natural selection carried on through long ages. Indications of the gradational forms through which the original species have passed, are found both in the fossil flora and fauna (but especially in the case of the fossil elephant). These gradational forms lead up to man, who is the last of the series, and therefore of incalculable age. These two sets of propositions might be placed at the head of the book, and the whole of its contents marshalled under them in order as evidence in support of their validity. When, however, we come to look at this evidence, both as respects its quality and quantity, we feel bound to declare that there is hardly enough to warrant us in saying that there is just a bare presumption that the human race is very much older than we have been accustomed to think it is. Two or three skulls, a few bones of perhaps a score skeletons, a few fragments of pottery, a considerable quantity of stones of a peculiar form, these found in certain positions, in conjunction with other fossil remains, constitute the whole of the evidence that man has existed upon the earth for perhaps a thousand centuries. The facts are really few, the assumptions many, the inferences very large. However difficult it may be to explain the real nature and origin of these fossil remains, the more we look at it the more astonished are we that such a large conclusion should be made to rest on so narrow a basis of fact. The conclusion may be true, but the evidence adduced in support of it does not prove it to be true. In fact, Sir C. Lyell himself is doubtful; and certainly no man of sense will commit himself to the acceptance of a proposition so important, depending upon so little indisputable truth and fact. There is (as we shall presently see) no single fact of real importance to the question that is free from the element of doubt; and the more we examine the more the doubtful characteristics multiply, until the whole chain of evidence resolves itself into a series of separate and doubtful instances. One or two clear, indisputable facts would outweigh the whole catalogue of questionable instances here accumulated. This multiplication of supposed facts may appear, and is, imposing to the unreflecting mind, but it brings nothing to the strength of the argument. A commander might gather together all the one-armed, one-legged, one-eyed, deaf and dumb men in a country, and would thereby swell the numbers of his army greatly, and on paper his muster-roll might seem really formidable; yet, instead of adding to the strength and efficiency of his army, he would rather diminish its strength. We do not say that Sir C. Lyell has done anything analogous to this; but

what we do say is, that he has collected all the strongest instances he could find, and the result is a conclusion weakened by numberless doubts and beset by insuperable objections.

For example, the major premiss of his argument is not yet substantiated. Beyond all question, the formation of many strata was a process of long duration. It is a favourite theory of Sir C. Lyell, that all great geological changes have been very slow and gradual. He is loath to admit that there has been anything of a violent and revolutionary character. He is fond of assuming that the present rate of change has always prevailed. There is very much to support this opinion: it explains many phenomena. Yet still we must remember that it is an opinion only, an opinion that is contravened by other eminent geologists, who bring reasonings as acute and facts as pertinent to the support of their theories as are those which Sir C. Lyell arrays on his side. Even our author himself feels compelled now and then to admit that rates of change in previous geological periods may have been much more rapid than they are now. The comparison of ancient with modern depositions does not as yet warrant the conclusion that similar agencies producing similar results always required similar periods of time. It is open to us to believe, that in previous epochs of the history of our globe, its life, so to speak, moved at an accelerated ratio, and the whole mighty series of changes took place with vastly greater rapidity than they do now. If we take either line of evidence by which Sir C. Lyell seeks to support his theory respecting the age of certain Post Tertiary strata, we shall find that they are insufficient to support the major premiss of his argument.

When we turn to the phenomena which are supposed to indicate the great age of recent strata, we are not less dissatisfied with the really meagre character of the evidence; as, for instance, an important witness in this case is a piece of burnt brick found in the mud of the Nile. In 1851 and 1854 Mr. L. Horner, under the auspices of the Royal Society, made a series of borings in the Nile for the purpose of ascertaining the time during which the vast alluvium over which the river spreads itself had been forming. Ninety-five borings were made. At a depth of thirty-eight feet small fragments of burnt brick and pottery were found; and from one boring at Besousse, which reached a depth of nearly sixty feet, small particles of rubbish and baked clay were brought up. No marine shells and no fossil relics of any extinct species were found. Bones of contemporary domestic animals, as the dog, cow, and ass, were met with. We may very safely believe that these organic and artificial relics belong to the human period. What, then, is their age?

In round numbers, 12,000, 13,800, 14,500, and 20,570 years, according as we take the estimate of this or the other investigator. M. Girard, of the French expedition, found a ruined Nilometer at Elephantina, near Assouan, which gave the rate of deposit at 5.192 inches per century. At Rhoda he found another, which gave the rate of 4.960 inches in the century. Mr. Horner believes that the deposit only amounts to $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in a century, and Sir C. Lyell assumes 6 inches for the same period. He says, 'If we assume six inches in a century, the burnt brick found at a depth of 60 feet would be 12,000 years old' (p. 37). No doubt he is liberal in his assumption of nearly one inch more in a century than the highest calculation of M. Girard. But then it is assumption only. Certain monuments are supposed by some antiquaries to be of a certain age. Since their erection the valley of the Nile appears to have risen so many feet. If we assume a rate of deposit slightly greater than that suggested by the monuments, fragments of pottery and brick found at a depth of 60 feet must be 12,000 years old. Sir C. Lyell is not quite satisfied with these calculations, nor will be any one else who considers the statement of Herodotus, that even in his time the areas of enclosed temples, from which the waters of the Nile had been shut out, appeared sunk. Whenever the surrounding barriers were broken down through being allowed to fall into decay, there would be swept into the areas a vast quantity of mud and relics from the surrounding banks, so that in a few years a larger quantity would be deposited in them than would be laid on the great plain outside in many centuries. The assumption requires us to believe—first, that the rate of deposition has always been the same; second, that the bed of the valley itself has undergone no change of elevation or depression, neither of which things have been proved; and third, that the position of a relic is always evidence of its antiquity, an inference abundantly disproved by Geikie in reference to the canoes, &c., found in the bed of the Clyde. Another indication of the age of these recent strata is derived from the earth-mounds of Ohio, containing skulls of the Mexican or Toltecan race, silver and copper articles, pottery, &c. On one of these mounds a tree was growing with 800 rings of annual growth. General Harrison says that 'several generations of trees, lasting several thousand years, *perhaps*, preceded these.' Without supposing that the General was ever wrong in his calculations, the *perhaps* he introduces is itself a sufficiently strong element of doubt to lead us to reject this evidence as comparatively unimportant.

A third witness is the Delta of the Mississippi. The lowest

estimate of the time required for the formation of the Delta would lead us to assign a high antiquity to it, amounting to many tens of thousands of years, '*probably more than a hundred thousand.*' What we have said above with respect to the uniformity of geologic change may be urged here in doubt of this excessive period of time.

We are also reminded of the upheavals in the central district of Scotland and in Scandinavia, results of processes indefinitely long. But these very results themselves supply us with an element of doubt certainly strong enough to forbid our coming to any hasty conclusion as to the world's age. The occurrence of things in the same bed or the same relative position by no means implies that they are all of the same date. The cautious remarks of Mr. Geikie, adopted by Sir C. Lyell, in reference to the canoes found in the bed of the Clyde, make this sufficiently clear. The varying depths of an estuary, the set of its currents, the scouring influence of tides, are all material elements in the problem, and when we come to take these into account it seems more and more impossible to affirm the real age of this or that deposit.

We are told that there are parts of the sea-coast of Norway and Sweden where the Post Tertiary marine strata occur at a height of 600 feet above the present sea level. 'If we could assume,' says Sir C. Lyell, 'that there had been an average rise of two and a half feet in a century, it would require 24,000 years for these parts of the sea-coast to attain the height of 600 feet.' Of course, if we were permitted in any argument to assume anything we pleased, and whatever we required, it would be an easy thing to prove any proposition, no matter how absurd or impossible. But if the conclusion we wish to urge upon general acceptance is to receive that acceptance, it must rest not upon assumptions, however fair or likely they may be, but upon facts and propositions already proved and generally accepted. Geology is a great science, but it has not yet attained to a knowledge of the dates when the internal forces of the earth exercised their energy in efforts of alternate upheaval and depression, nor of the spaces of time they required for the accomplishment of the mighty results upon which we gaze with so much of awe and wonder.

But if we turn to the evidence brought forward in support of the minor premiss of the argument, more interesting, and relatively more important at the present time, we experience just the same kind of disappointment, and are overpowered by the same elements of doubt and suspicion. We are astonished as we think how little there really is for the conclusion to rest upon. The

statement is, that in certain strata of incalculable age, along with the fossil remains of extinct fauna and flora, works of art and human remains have been found. We will consider presently what weight we ought to attach to the different parts of this evidence, taking in order the works of art and the human remains. We do not doubt that such and such so-called remains have been found in such and such places: we do doubt that they are what they are said to be, and that the interpretation given of their appearance is the correct one. That Sir C. Lyell and other eminent men of science and honour have picked up with their own hands and seen with their own eyes pieces of bone and stone, and even perfect bones and stones of distinguishable shape, is no more to be doubted than that we went to bed last night, awoke this morning, and are now reading the present article. But it is possible for men of science to be carried away by a passion for their hypotheses and theories, so that every fact is made to bend in a given direction, and every consideration favourable to the proposed theory is allowed to have more than its due weight, whilst opposing facts and considerations are passed over with less attention and regard than they really ought to have. He is a man of rare genius and temperament who can calmly survey all friendly and unfriendly phenomena in any given case, and allow to every single fact its proper weight, and assign to it its proper place. Sir C. Lyell is both cautious and candid, but having given in his adhesion to a particular theory, it is more than we can expect from him that he will not be unduly favourable to the hypothesis he seeks to establish.

Let us look at these so-called works of art. We are directed, first of all, to the Danish peat-bogs, which vary in thickness from ten to thirty feet. A section is open before us, and in it are certain remains. Danish antiquaries have described three successive periods: that of iron, corresponding to the modern, or Christian period; that of bronze, anterior to the Roman occupation of Gaul and Helvetia; and that of stone, supposed to be from 4,000 to 7,000 years before the present time. In the section of peat before us are embedded remains of the Scotch fir, the oak, and common beech, the latter being uppermost. A flint instrument was actually taken by Steenstrup from beneath a Scotch fir. Inasmuch as it has been presumed that tombs containing only stone implements are older in date than both the iron and the bronze, it is decided that the periods when the forests of Denmark have consisted respectively of fir, oak, or beech, corresponded to those of stone, bronze, and iron. The shell-mounds, or kitchen-middens, huge heaps of oyster, cockle, mussel, and periwinkle-shells—creatures no longer inhabiting

the Baltic, save in dwarfed, degenerate forms—belong to the period of stone. From these heaps knives, and various other implements of stone, horn, bone, and wood, have been taken, together with fragments of rude pottery. At least 4,000 years, it is said, were required for the formation of the peat in which these articles have been found.

In connection with these we have to take the lake-dwellings of Switzerland. In 1853-4 the Lake of Zurich sank lower than it had ever done before. Whilst raising an embankment, in order to rescue the land laid bare, the inhabitants found traces of human settlements on the spot at some former period. These traces consisted of piles, on which villages had been raised similar to those of the Papuans of New Guinea, the dwellers on the Tchadda, and the Indians of Lake Maracaybo. Further investigations led to the discovery of such quantities of artificial and animal relics as to justify the inquirers in assigning three ages to these remains, those of stone, bronze, and iron, corresponding, in fact, to the same periods in Scandinavia, and having a probable antiquity of from 4,000 to 7,000 years. This age is not very startling, and we might admit it without any question, perhaps, if we were quite certain that stone productions were never contemporary with those of bronze or iron, and especially if we were quite certain as to the time required for the growth of the peat. We know that in Hatfield Moss it has accumulated eight feet above the roads made by the Romans, which would give 6,750 years as the time consumed in the growth of the Danish peat-bogs thirty feet deep; the same as M. Gilliéron computes to be the age of the lake-dwelling at the Pont de Thièle. M. De Perthes, however, estimates the time required for the growth of the peat in the Somme valley at something like one foot in a thousand years; a calculation that Sir C. Lyell feels constrained to resist. With this difference of opinion, and the uncertainty that hangs over the matter, we may well be excused for attributing to the peat an absolutely greater age than such an example as Hatfield Moss suggests to us; whilst it is open to us to believe that peat may have grown at even a more rapid rate than this in some former period of its history.

We pass on to consider in a group the flint implements found in different parts of England and the Continent. At Brixham in England, in the valley of the Somme, in the valley of the Ouse, at Hoxne in Suffolk, are those deposits which are most noticeable in themselves and most available in argument. These flint instrument flourish in Post Pliocene alluvium, and they appear coeval with extinct mammalia. According to their general shape, geologists term them knives, axes, arrow-heads.

Nobody but an adept can recognise them as tools. It requires great faith to believe that they are tools at all. But on the word of such men as Professor Ramsay we will receive them as the first products of human skill. It is the uniformity, as well as the peculiarity of shape of these stones, that leads to their being attributed to human workmanship. The chipping to which they have been subject cannot be regarded as accidental; and it is difficult, if not impossible, to find any natural force which would account for their present peculiar condition. By whom and when were they fabricated? The answer of Sir C. Lyell is, that they were made by the earliest members of the human race, hundreds of thousands of years ago, when the faculties of man and the inventions of his genius were at their lowest and most stagnant point. He has no doubt that they are of human origin; and as to the lapse of time which has taken place since they were made, we have but to refer to what he says respecting the Bedford sections, which teach that the fabricators of these antique tools, found in such abundance in the ancient gravels, and the extinct mammalia coeval with them, were all Post Glacial, that the mere volume of the drift in the valley of the Somme is sufficient to demonstrate a vast lapse of time, to know what are his opinions upon this point. But is this reply true? Frankly we say we don't know. It is certainly a convenient hypothesis for accounting for otherwise inextricable appearances. It is so unscientific for a man of science to say 'he does not know,' that almost any explanation or hypothesis is better than none. When he gets such a one as this he must find it hard work to maintain it: there are so many ugly questions starting up which must be answered before he can persuade the world to believe as he does. It seems strange that we should find the tools, chips broken from the tools, and no traces of the instruments used in making the tools, and still less traces of the makers. Not a single human bone was found in the alluvial sand and gravel of the Somme, and the same holds good with respect to the whole of the tool-bearing drift of other parts of Europe. Messrs. MacAndrew and Forbes testify to the scarcity of works of art and human remains even in waters only half a mile from a population of millions of inhabitants. But this is not satisfactory. Surely, if we may suppose that the accumulation of the flints in the gravel was caused by the early hunting and fishing tribes who frequented the same frozen rivers and their tributaries for hundreds or thousands of years in succession, who let their axes and knives slip through holes in the ice, who had their manufactories of them on the same spot, we may also suppose that one or two specimens of the ingenious artisans who made them would have

remained to give us a little more decisive testimony as to the real origin of these very doubtful implements. We say doubtful, because many of them are worn, snapped, or triturated by river action to such a degree that it is hard to say if shape they have how that shape became. Let these questions be fairly grappled with and answered, and then we shall be better able to admit the flints as trustworthy evidence of man's antiquity. Is it really impossible to conceive of any natural cause capable of producing such shapes and results? The simple flakes might possibly be produced by natural means only; at least, such is the opinion of some investigators. Why have we no human remains amongst these so-called works of art, seeing that the bones of man are quite as capable of preservation as those of *Ursus spelæus*, *Elephas primigenius*, *Rhinoceros tichorhinus*? Had the flint-makers and users no other tools than these? Admitting that they are of human origin, is it absolutely certain that they cannot have come into their present positions through the operation of causes even now at work and producing the most startling results? The imperfection of the geological record is so great that it is not easily possible for even they who are constantly working in the field to form a just conception of its extreme character. We pause, therefore, and decline to believe in man's supposed antiquity as it is made to depend on the evidence of the flints.

Better evidence than that of the flints is said to be forthcoming in the human remains which have been dug up at different times in different places.

I. There are the human remains found by M. Tournal, at Bize, in Languedoc. These were accompanied by remains of animals and land-shells, and a few fragments of pottery. They consisted principally of teeth. In a cavern at Pondres, near Nismes, M. Christol also discovered some human bones associated with bones of an extinct hyæna and a rhinoceros, and 'fragments of two kinds of pottery, the lowest and rudest being below the level of the extinct mammalia.' From their position and companionships it was judged that the living man and mammalia were contemporaneous. These are, however, put out of court by Sir C. Lyell himself, who concedes that the remains in question are not coeval, that intermixtures have taken place at different times and in different ways which will sufficiently account for their present position.

II. The next evidence is derived from the remains of the Liége caverns specially investigated by Dr. Schmerling in 1833-34. Here he not only found bones belonging to human hands and feet, but distinct remains of at least three individuals. There

was the skull of a young person embedded by the side of a mammoth's tooth. This unhappily fell to pieces during extraction. Another skull, of an adult, was buried five feet deep in a breccia, in which the tooth of a rhinoceros, several bones of a horse, and some of the reindeer, together with some ruminants, occurred. Here was treasure-trove; and fortunately for science it was preserved in so tolerable a state of integrity that rising geologists and anatomists may study it at their leisure in the museum of the University of Liége. Of this Engis skull, as it is termed in the scientific world, we shall have a little to say presently. With respect to the general question of the antiquity of these Liége bones, we have to observe that Sir C. Lyell himself has not arrived at positive certainty. Two sets of evidence are to guide us in arriving at a conclusion: first, considerations of the time required for animals of the cave period becoming first scarce and then extinct; and secondly, the great number of centuries required for the physical geography of the Liége district to be changed from its ancient to its modern configuration. Now, if we take the hypothesis of uniform and protracted agencies to account for this change, we are open to the objection that no lapse of ages at the present rate of change would suffice to bring about such a change as that observed in the Liége district. In view of this objection Sir C. Lyell is forced to admit, that 'it is more than probable that the rate of change was once far more active than it is now.' Can Sir Charles tell us how much more rapid? If we have to admit a greater rapidity of change at all, it seems far more reasonable to admit such a rate as will harmonize rather with the great fact of man's history as known to us apart from the geological record, admittedly incomplete, than to endeavour to fix a time that shall appear to account for a paltry score or so of doubtful facts in geological history, and at the same time do real violence and offer unmitigated contradiction to all the greater facts of the history of man.

III. The next evidence is the Neanderthal skull, found in a grotto in that valley, in the year 1857, by Dr. Fuhlrott. 'This cranium, which included the frontal bone, both parietals, part of the squamous, and the upper third of the occipital, was of unusual size and thickness, the forehead narrow and very low, and the projection of the supraorbital ridges enormously great.' The bones found with it agreed, as to absolute and relative length, with the corresponding bones of a modern European; but the thickness of them was very extraordinary, and the ridges for the attachment of the muscles were developed to an unusual degree. In fact, the skeleton would really correspond more closely to that of the gorilla than to that of man. Now what is the weight of this

evidence? Professor Huxley declares that 'he had never seen such an ape-like skull before;' and also that it is the 'most brutal of all known skulls having the slightest pretensions to humanity.' Not a flattering testimonial, certainly. When it was examined by a number of eminent German naturalists, in 1857, many of them expressed a strong doubt as to its right to be considered human at all; and Sir C. Lyell declares that it approaches nearer in outline to the chimpanzee than any other human skull. Here, therefore, there is room for doubt. Further, when we remember that it was found in a bed of loam only five feet thick, which loam, and possibly the supposed human body to which the bones belonged, might easily have been washed through the passage which led to the cave below, the doubt is strengthened. And when Sir C. Lyell tells us that he thinks 'it probable that the fossil may be about the same age as those found by Dr. Schmerling in the Liège cavern; but as no other animal remains were found with it, there is no proof that it may not be newer. Its position lends no countenance whatever to the supposition of its being more ancient'—we subside into a belief that the respected Neanderthal individual was, after all, an unfortunate chimpanzee or gorilla, who came to grief in comparatively recent times, and whose remains were washed into the cave, where they lay buried until Dr. Fuhlrott performed the part of resurrectionist. In a critical age like ours, when all men's eyes are being opened, so that they can see clearly what happened to Moses, and know better than he knew himself what he did, it behoves us to be on our guard as to what statements we receive, even on the testimony of the most learned philosophers of the day. Whilst our kind friends Colenso, Newman, and Holyoake, are working to emancipate us from the superstition of believing what God has said, let us be careful not to fall into the worse superstition of believing the theories and unsupported hypotheses of every man of science, but let us examine them with at least the same critical scrutiny and scepticism we are asked to apply to revelation.

IV. The Engis skull previously referred to belongs, according to Professor Huxley, to the Australian type. It is more difficult to deal with than the Neanderthal skull. It seems more unequivocally ancient, and is of a much higher type. It may, indeed, have belonged to the same race, since differences of cranial measurements are not sufficient evidence to the contrary. If human, its intellectual development was of the scantiest order: if pithecan, its owner was certainly a distinguished member of the race. In the meantime, whilst this question is being settled, the fact that the larger proportion of the remains of

mammalia found along with it belongs, in the opinion of many eminent paleontologists, specifically to the fauna of our own period, will help us to keep our judgments in suspense on a point not yet decided by the doctors.

V. Not far from the foot of the Pyrenees, at Aurignac, is a sepulchral grotto, in which, in the year 1852, the remains of seventeen men and women were found. Amongst these fragments were two entire skulls. At the same place were found remains of the mammoth, tichorhine rhinoceros, cave-lion, cave-bear, a bodkin (?), other articles made of horn, and numerous flint implements. A vertical slab closed the sepulchre in front, and separated the human from the animal remains which were outside. The latter appear to be the remains of animals consumed by the former. 'If correctly interpreted, this burial-place helps us to trace back the belief in a future state far anterior to the times of history and tradition.' If correctly interpreted! Doubtless Dr. Amiel, Mayor of Aurignac, is a very honourable man, and has, no doubt, correctly reported to us what he saw when the grotto was opened. But it is upon his word only that we have to rely as to the character of the remains designated human, and found in the cave. He saw them, found many of the bones in an incomplete state of ossification, thought they belonged to a very small race; the skulls were injured in the transfer; and finally, the whole mass was reinterred in the public cemetery, and no one was able afterwards to point out the spot where. The geological position of the grotto is not ancient, and it is more than likely that the fossils of mammalia supposed to be extinct before the human period were really contemporaneous with it, even on the supposition of its having a very low antiquity.

VI. We come next to the fossil man of Denise; though he is really no man at all, but only a skull, radius, a few lumbar vertebræ and metatarsal bones. This gentleman was found in the volcanic breccia near Le Puy-en-Velay, in Central France, and is supposed to have lived at the period of the last eruptions of Velay. The district is remarkable for its knavery, and strong suspicion has gathered round the head of this fossil man; so that it has been found needful to hold several scientific inquests over his remains, in order to find out whether he was an impostor or a true man. The balance of opinion is in favour of the latter view. But then his skull is of the ordinary Caucasian or European type; a fact that rather staggered the naturalists assembled at Le Puy in 1856; a perplexity which is not wholly removed from the mind of Sir C. Lyell, even by the aid of Huxley's observations on the Engis skull. For ourselves,

knowing that it is possible to manufacture all sorts of antiques so as to deceive the very elect, we are disposed to believe that the man of Denise may, after all, belong to this class of spurious antiques.

VII. The last witness who is called is the Natchez man, who seems, if all that is said of him be true, to be that very wonderful person the oldest inhabitant. Like all old people, he is very much worn down, and now appears only as he is represented by his *os innominatum*. This bone was found in the basin of the Mississippi, along with the remains of the mastodon and megalonyx. Prior to this a certain Dr. Dowler had found a skeleton beneath four cypress forests, in a cutting made for the New Orleans gas-works. The skeleton was of the Red Indian type, and supposed to be about fifty thousand years old. If the claims of the Natchez man to have coexisted with the mastodon be admitted, it would follow, from the assumed rate of growth of the Delta of the Mississippi, that North America was peopled by the human race more than a thousand centuries ago. Unfortunately, we cannot be quite sure on this point. Sir C. Lyell will by no means guarantee the calculations of Dr. Dowler, whilst he admits that there is not positive testimony enough to satisfy us as to the real age of the Natchez man. It is allowable for us, even in his opinion, to suspend our judgment, which accordingly we do.

We have thus hastily glanced at the individual phenomena brought forward in support of the minor premiss, and we find that there is not one that is really trustworthy. They are all beset by questionable circumstances. The strongest of all is not free from elements of doubt. 'If we assume,' 'perhaps,' 'probably,' 'it may be,' are the leading words in the accounts of these different cases. The evidence is felt to be insufficient, both in quantity and quality; but it is expected that some day a proper number of undoubted skeletons, ranging through all the gradational series, from the Neanderthal specimen to the present dwellers upon the earth, will be found. We do not say how like an order for the manufacture of specimens this is. We wait until they appear. The hypotheses proposed to us are, as Sir C. Lyell tells us, startling for their boldness. In the present state of knowledge, our attempts to compare the chronological relations of periods of upheaval and depression, and the like, are very conjectural. Immensely more collateral evidence must be secured before we can fix the number of centuries required for certain events.

The facts narrated are interesting, some of them are difficult to account for, but as yet they have no real argumentative value.

The conclusion which is made to rest upon these cannot be sustained.

We have not space to examine the subsidiary argument brought forward by Sir C. Lyell, though we may say he does not succeed better in this than in his main argument. If we apprehend it aright, it is as follows. It has been proved that species originate by variation and natural selection, each original species in the course of long ages passing through a vast series of intervening gradational forms. It is the tendency of these gradational forms to become extinct; hence we account for the wide divergence between the original type and its modern representative. These gradational forms are more numerous than is usually believed; hence again we account for the gap between extinct and living forms. These intermediate forms have been destroyed; therefore it is no objection that we cannot find any of these missing links: but secondly, they do exist, though we do not know of them; therefore believe the theory, and one day you shall have the evidence. Man is the last of this long series; therefore the race is of incalculable age. This argument is very like that we sometimes see learned counsel urge on behalf of their clients: first, plaintiff gave defendant the money; second, defendant never had it; third, he paid it back. We confess that the book is a disappointing one. It is portly and respectable, but constitutionally weak. It sometimes puzzles, but never convinces. As a tentative book it may have its use: as a landmark of truth it has hardly any.

Whether we shall have to come to a belief in the immense antiquity of our race, or a belief in a race of pre-Adamic savages and users of flint implements, or to a revision of our present chronology of the race, or we must retain our present belief, as it rests upon the Biblical records, in all its main features, is a point not yet to be settled. In the meantime we should do ill to pull down or desert the old House of Belief on this matter. As yet there is no evidence whatever really to justify a change of belief. There is enough to stimulate inquiry, but no more. The theory may be true: there is nothing to prove it so. The credulity of anti-Biblical and anti-Christian men may lay hold of the assumptions and hypotheses of the book, and may try to use them against religion; but they have no real power in them, and need therefore create no real alarm. At any rate, so far, we may rest assured that the Bible writers were truer historians and prophets than the Greek and Latin poets, or even modern professors and *savans*.

III.

SCIENTIFIC MANUALS FOR THE YOUNG.*

IT is now how many years ago since Lord Brougham headed the *Useful Knowledge movement*? We always find it very pleasing and yet saddening to look over some of the earlier prefaces and prospectuses of the Society; very amusing to glance at the cloud of light *littérateurs* who skirmished in the van of those grave writers to whom we owe the solid tomes in dark green cloth, some or other of which must have been in the hands of most of us. Pleasing, because the idea was a noble one, and supported in a way in which such noble ideas are supported in the land of ours which is so often twitted with never going to war for an idea. Look at the array of notable names on their committee: the very list is a page out of the history of the country. Consider the amount of subscriptions, and that in a day when the financial organization of societies was not so perfect, perhaps, as it now is. Still it is a little saddening to read such magnificence of promise, and reflect that there is still so much to be done towards realizing it. What a change was in store for us! We were all to be made *savans* in sport, scientific philosophers from the cradle, by means of easy manuals and dialogues which, invading the nursery, should drive out the fairy tale or the newer child's novel of Mrs. Sherwood & Co. There was to be, above all, a thorough revolution in school work: what had been highly honoured there was now to seek a lower place, perhaps even to disappear altogether. Men, reproducing the ideas which Milton, and Locke, and Oliver Goldsmith had broached in their generation, spoke of altering the whole system of education. Latin and Greek were voted useless, or nearly so, except as special branches with a view to certain professions. Latin verse, above all, fell under the ban of those literary sharpshooters, who, like the Rev. Sydney Smith, began that fierce fire of indiscriminating satire which lasted long after we had grown case-hardened against it; lasted, indeed, until Mr. Dickens, in his 'David Copperfield,' amused people in general, but damaged

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- * 1. *Cours Élémentaire d'Histoire Naturelle, à l'Usage des Collèges et des Maisons d'Education.* Paris: Langlois et Le Clercq.
 2. *L'Histoire d'une Bouchée de Pain. Lettres à une Petite Fille, sur la Vie de l'Homme et des Animaux.* Par Jean Macé, Professeur à Blebenheim. Paris: Dentu. 1861.

his cause by firing off at poor Dr. Blimber all his guns, new and old, light and heavy, and firing with such vigour and pertinacity that he managed to burst most of them. Latin verses have survived, are even said to be looking more lively than they were; but it is very amusing to read the record of the battle against them. Take two or three extracts made at random from the eminent Whig Rector of Combe Florey. 'It is no uncommon thing to meet with Englishmen whom, but for their grey hairs and wrinkles, we might easily mistake for school-boys. Their talk is of Latin verses; and it is quite clear, if men's ages are to be dated from the state of their mental progress, that such men are eighteen years of age and not a day older.' Again: 'The head boy of a public school comes into public life with nothing else to command respect or regard but a talent for fugitive poetry in a dead language.' These are samples of his light artillery. It is hopelessly weak. Only to touch one point, we may say (what every one knows), that never did its captain leave any English public school without far other grounds for commanding respect and regard than the power of making Latin verses. He could not have been there without learning self-reliance and the art of managing men. Why, the founders of our Indian empire were public-school men. However, there is much in Sydney Smith of truer metal than these frivolities, much that helped in its day to batter down walls which we have since seen the propriety of removing altogether. Hear him: 'A learned man? a scholar? upon whom are these epithets of approbation bestowed? Are they given to men acquainted with the science of government? thoroughly masters of the geographical and commercial relations of Europe? to men who know the properties of bodies and their action upon each other? No: this is not learning; it is chemistry or political economy, not learning. The distinguishing abstract term, the epithet *scholar*, is reserved for him who writes on the *Æolic* reduplication, and is familiar with Greek irregular verbs.' Or again: 'The present state of classical education cultivates the imagination a great deal too much, and other habits of mind a great deal too little. . . . The finished classical scholar is a man principally conversant with works of imagination. His feelings are quick, his fancy lively, his taste good. Talents for speculation and original inquiry he has none; nor has he formed the invaluable habit of pushing things up to their first principles, or of collecting dry and unamusing facts as the materials of reasoning. All the solid and masculine parts of his understanding are left wholly without cultivation. He hates the pain of thinking, and suspects every man whose boldness

and originality call upon him to defend his opinions and prove his assertions.' This is of course an overcharged but still a too true picture of many, perhaps most classical scholars of thirty years ago, of far too many of the present generation; and that it is not true of the majority is mainly due to the movement in furtherance of which the Useful Knowledge Society gathered and spent its money, sought out its editors, and published its books. It has done a great work. Many of its books are even now most valuable: then they were the best of their kind. The very fact that side by side with the literary movement went on also a movement in politics, and that the men who were active in the one mostly took the lead in the other, this fact helped the cause of science immensely. Because our encyclopædists were thundering at Government for a Reform Bill, a settlement of tithe, and so forth, therefore the Birmingham artisan who longed to become a voter read and studied the books which went out under their fiat whenever he had an opportunity. Who can tell the help this has been in keeping us at the head of the inventing and manufacturing interests in the world? Who can pretend to underrate the importance of such an influence, who knows anything of our manufacturing districts, who is aware how often the intelligent working man of one decade becomes the small manufacturer of the next, and how often his knowledge, self-acquired by the help of such books as the Society's, enables him speedily to become a thriving manufacturer on a large scale? You may question the advisability of this, the *good* of it; but it is the actual state of things, it is 'progress,' it is the practical result of 'free trade in knowledge.' But the influence of these books has not been confined to 'the manufacturing districts,' or 'the great towns:' several of our inventions, many of our improvements in existing inventions, are due to some country-bred man, who, had not the right book (say a treatise on hydrostatics, or on applied mechanics, or one of those admirable little half-chemical manuals which Mr. Weale, taking up the Society's work, has put forth) come into his hands at the right time, might have remained to the end of his days merely an ingenious eccentric mechanic, such as most country doctors know of within a day's ride of their post-town, given to do common things in strange ways, and perhaps inventing scientific bird-cages, whereby the prisoner draws its own water and grinds its own canary-seed, or such-like. The right man read the right book at the right time; and so England got one more valuable civil engineer or machinist, or one or other of those workers to whose quicker thought no less than to their

sturdier labour she owes her place among the nations. Oxford, too, has been moved at last. Oxford held out for a long time; for Oxford is Conservative (though she has Mr. Gladstone for a member), and, as we said, the movement began among the Whigs. But Oxford has given way. There has not yet been time for much result there, but come it must; for since the days of old Roger Bacon there has not been such a stirring among those colleges and halls so long given over to Aldrich and to sleepy traditional comments upon commentaries on Aristotle. But, as we said, Latin verses have survived, and are looking up. A reaction set in some years back, chiefly perhaps among the upper middle class, as they are called, in favour of the discarded classics. There were several reasons for this: there was the disappointment necessarily consequent on exaggerated expectations; there was clerical influence (strongest on the self-made man who has got to be an important personage in his parish, and deems himself the guide and counsellor of his evangelical parson, who really directs him often as thoroughly as a Roman priest would);* above all, there was the desire, actually rabid in some people, to set a mark on their boys, distinguishing them from the children of those out of whose ranks they had been lifted for one or two generations. And so, when the National schools and the British schools began to teach, by the help of those wonderful class-books, almost as much *de omni scribili* as the new-fledged aristocrat could get for his boy at an expensive 'Pestalozzian establishment,' why, Pestalozzi and his plans fell to a discount, an education of nothing but science was voted plebeian, and Latin and Greek began to be insisted on as much as ever. Of course those who went back into the old camp had reasons plenty and sufficient for the change: 'Nothing like Latin to form the solid basis of an education,' and such-like. We know the old stock arguments, which are certainly not altogether fallacies, though made much more of than they deserve to be. But the true weighty argument was this, 'Jones can't afford that his lad should spend four or more years hammering at what he'll look at, and not often think about, when he leaves school; but I can; and so I'll show Jones that (though we meet at vestry, and

* 'The clergy,' says Sydney Smith, unfortunately with too much truth, 'would bring up the first young men of the country as if they were all to keep small grammar-schools in little country towns.' He speaks of 'the timid and absurd apprehension of the clergy of letting out the minds of youth in difficult and important subjects.' *Holy poltroons*, he calls them. Alas! your clergyman shuns such subjects because he mostly knows next to nothing about them. A changed Oxford will change this.

vote on the same side at elections, and are the very best friends in the world) my boy and his are not on the same footing at all.' This reaction, though, had a certain reasonableness in it, inasmuch as Sydney Smith's school were far too indiscriminative in their wish for change: they would have made a clean sweep, carrying away both lumber and useful things. But this reaction we have now to guard against, lest the cry against the *ologies*, which has been growing stronger of late, overpower the voice of reason; lest, in our dread of giving a smattering of scientific teaching, we leave the rising generation as ignorant on these subjects as country gentlemen in general were thirty years ago. Just now it is *science* which needs putting forward in schools. Parents are divided into the two classes; those who can afford luxuries, and those who cannot. The first like their sons to luxuriate in classics: they are the thing, the fashion. The others (who wish their children to *rise*, and who have at last learned that a university education is a poor investment for a lad with no more brains than will keep him respectably behind his father's counter) will have lots of arithmetic, plenty of mathematics of all sorts: 'That's something practical: they can't have too much of that.' It was so in Horace's day, and will be so while man is as he is. We remember the Roman satirist's account of the big sons of the big men in the parish, centurions who had settled down into estated gentry, coming to Orbilius's with the sums on their slates which they had worked over-night, while young Horace himself was taken from this vulgar teaching, and put to learn Greek literature (the classics of his day), and to pursue a course of study which his life shows us included neither the art military nor politics. This was because his father chose to afford an expense that his son might get into 'good society,' and so forth. Well, neither of these classes of parents take very kindly to scientific teaching. The poorer dread it: 'It will draw the boys off from other and more necessary things.' The richer either despise it or else are content to leave it to their children's option; and so of course the thing is a failure, for few boys care to take up extra work, and only those whose zeal is stimulated by conscious love of their subject will undergo the labour necessary for anything like systematic training in science. Besides, in this age of competitive examination there are so many easy prizes (some for every class) open in other departments; and with parents the consideration has no small weight that it is a cheaper and readier plan to put the screw on the local Member or other personage until the desired clerkship is obtained, than to meet the necessary expense of a scientific education. Then again, both classes have the clench-

ing argument, 'It's no use taking up with these subjects unless you excel in them.' *Mediocribus esse* is no more conceded to chemists or zoologists than to poets. This argument always seemed to us of the very weakest kind. Who wishes or expects every boy who dabbles in chemicals, or constructs a toy electrical machine, to become a Lavoisier or a Wheatstone? Drawing and painting will probably always be taught in schools, though no one is foolish enough to think that we shall ever on that account have many more Landseers or Copley Fieldings than we should have if drawing were as little taught in schools as casting in metal. Yet though scarcely any one expects his son to turn out a first-class painter, every one is very glad to have him taught to please himself and friends by filling his portfolio with sketches while on a walking-tour; provided, that is, the lad does not prove (what very few boys really are) hopelessly incapable of drawing a straight line. And so of 'science': let it take the same rank as drawing in our schools. It has done so in many. This is part of the good effected by the movement of which we spoke at the outset of these remarks; good which is shown to be permanent, for it has lived in spite of all that charlatan lecturers, and ignorant dabblers, and the dulllest way of teaching (to which gerund-grinding was easy work, and to which nonsense verses a very trifle), have done to crush it; it has lived to show its vitality. Look at the periodical literature of the day. There must be a *demand* for the scientific and quasi-scientific articles in which several of the most popular prints deal so largely. Could magazines like the 'Cornhill,' for instance, or 'Good Words,' have ventured twenty or even ten years ago to give, month after month, *hard* (some say *heavy*) scientific articles, some of them on several of the most important physiological questions? Could this have been done in the days of 'Mr. Urban' and the *dilettante* antiquarianism of the 'Gentleman's Magazine'? The classical reaction will surely not try to stop this onward movement, this opening of the public mind to questions about which the fathers and mothers of the present race of magazine-readers thought little and read less. What has to be guarded against is, lest it should exclude the *ologies* from school-teaching even more than they are now excluded, lest it should turn young people out into the world to pick up their scientific notions from popular articles in magazines, instead of laying in this, as we do in other things, a good foundation, on which any kind of superstructure may be raised according as circumstances or bent of mind, or both, may dictate. Experts tell us that it is possible to systematize what is called scientific teaching, to make it an instrument for careful training in the

processes of reasoning. Besides, it would never come *alone*: there would always be the Euclid and the Latin Grammar to fall back upon. We have only claimed for it the same level as drawing. All that should be insisted on is that what is taught be taught thoroughly and well; for of the two evils it is hard to tell which is more injurious, to give a boy no notions whatsoever on any of these matters, or to give him a loose smattering about them all. No; let what is taught be so taught that it may be fit to be the basis of reasoning, taught as Bacon would have had it taught; and then, however little the boys may learn about each subject, they will not be loading their minds with a congeries of facts which they are unable to use, but will be storing up something to be made use of by-and-by. Then we shall hear nothing more of what is still the complaint, as it was in Sydney Smith's time, 'What are we to do with young men of seventeen or thereabouts?' Surely many would find engrossing employment for their leisure who are now cut off from scientific research by the want of sympathy of older people, the want of a few hints to start them, of a little easily available apparatus, and so forth. Sydney Smith says, 'Surely the memory of things is greater and more valuable than the memory of words.' This is true only if the things remembered call out ideas, lead on to thought, exercise other powers besides mere memory. On this principle only is a catalogue of the heathen deities or Athenian archons a more useful lesson than a list of the chemical elements, in that the dullest boy cannot help forming some few ideas about the former, exercising his intellect a little about them, while it is quite possible so to teach the latter, boy and teacher being on the same level of dulness, as to shut out thought and inquiry altogether, and reduce the matter to a mere string of names. But this is a question of teaching: the thing may be well taught, suggestively taught, just as readily as ill and drily. We all know the difference between a Cæsar lesson, for instance, merely construed and parsed, and the same lesson made the vehicle for half an hour's valuable well-considered illustration from other history, comparison of idiom, &c., such matters not being poured into the boys, but brought out by the gentle probing of the *maieutic* process.

Every good classical teacher understands this: the thing is to have the same system adopted in teaching scientific subjects. Therefore, to be well taught they must be taught by men of general information and educated minds, and not (as is often the case where they are taught now) by men who know nothing but the manipulation necessary for their own special craft; they

must be taught, that is, as sciences, not as arts. If one were driven to the choice, one would in most cases prefer them taught by a man of cultivated mind, even though imperfectly acquainted with his subject, and obliged to '*get it up*' as he went along, provided he had the happy knack of illustrating, of throwing light from other subjects on what he taught, than by ever so practised a manipulator who was unable to point out analogies or to follow along any line of thought which a chance question might open. But in a country like ours there is surely very seldom need for any one to be driven to such a choice. By-and-by, too, when what was a few years ago 'the new system' at Oxford has borne fruit, we shall have a race of head and second masters in our endowed schools able to do this sort of thing efficiently for themselves. Many of these endowed schools are just the places where, if anywhere, this kind of education may be successfully introduced, because it seems wanted. What is the state of some of these schools at present? Every one knows a grammar-school somewhere which does not fulfil the purpose of its foundation. In some cases, happily diminishing, there are a few miserable free boys relegated to a separate bench, discountenanced, discouraged by being taught chiefly what can be of no possible use to them.* In others the number of free boys is very large, and there (if there are not valuable exhibitions) the standard in every respect is almost certain to fall until what was surely meant to be a pattern to other schools—a place where high scholarship should be preserved, or at least excellence and accuracy in some things secured—sinks to the level of a commercial academy, and is given up to book-keeping and ornamental penmanship. Now here you have the place where your scientific grounding may be tried. It would have often been tried before, but that your Oxford or Cambridge schoolmaster probably knows nothing about modern science: he is a 'scholar' in Sydney Smith's sense; or else he was a wrangler, and knows nothing but pure mathematics. Besides, his endowment (thanks to the devices of corporations and the short-sightedness of founders) is often miserably small; so that he is driven to occupy his time with boarders, or take to any of the other clerical devices for living in gentlemanly style on journeyman's wages; and thus his time and energy are consumed, and, with never so good a will, he is unable to *work up* any subject sufficiently to

* We remember the retired master of a thriving boarding-school in the Midlands saying, 'There were some free boys when I went there, and they gave me a good deal of trouble at first, but I worked them out, sir, I *worked them out*;' meaning, he so dosed them with classics that they grew tired of coming.

be able to teach it as he, scholar-like, feels it ought to be taught. So he contents himself with getting for the lads a set of cheap lectures, very good, it may be, in themselves (and they often are very good, while they are also not seldom very trumpery), but needing to be followed out by regular lessons through the half-year. The boys listen to them pretty well, think them a good joke, and then, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, forget all about them till the lecturer comes round again. They are never reminded of them : the poor master will not trust himself even to examine on them. Surely there are many schools where a change might most advantageously be introduced in this way. Nothing would be destroyed. The classical reading is as low as it can be already ; you would not be disturbing this ; and besides, you would be giving those whose parents are constantly grumbling at the Latin, and urging you to give them less of it and more of cyphering, a little solid food which would tax their digestion sufficiently, and, assimilating, form good hard fibre. We trust to see the experiment made before long in some schools of the class which we have indicated.

But there is a way of teaching the elements of physics which seems to ensure *thoroughness*, and also to be suitable not for one class of schools but for all ; and this is teaching them through the medium of a foreign language. It is not without precedent. Not so long ago Newton's 'Principia' were untranslated. French mathematics are more and more largely read at the universities. If it is an innovation in school work, it is surely a reasonable one ; for why, when you teach language after language, should you put the same sort of food before your pupil in each ? Why, when you have been reading Sallust or Livy, go on to Charles XII. ? Why relieve Virgil by 'Morceau Poétiques' ? Surely it would be less wearying to take up even one of the French school manuals, the 'Cours Scientifiques,' for a change. Besides, teaching these things in a foreign language lessens the danger (which must always be the chief drawback to their being taught at all) of their being taught merely *by rote*. Of course anything is better than nothing, *in most cases* at least ; but it staggers our faith in this axiom to read some of the manuals of question and answer, which in some places are learned by heart and then repeated, without comment or explanation, to a teacher often as ignorant of such things as the child himself. This we know is what goes on in many of the schools which use their 'scientific teaching' as a puff. Now by using a foreign language you secure two good things : a teacher of a certain degree of general intelligence, probably therefore capable of at least seeing the child's difficulty and pointing the way to a solution ;

and next, the destruction of the merely '*by rote*' system, and the ensuring at least some small exercise of thought and judgment during the lesson. A stupid child may let every faculty sleep while pretending to learn a set of questions and answers; and if you invert the order of the questions you come to something as ludicrous as the scene described between Frederick William and the tall French grenadier* who only knew three sentences of German; but the dullest mind must be roused a little in dealing with a foreign tongue. The objection will, of course, be started that the language in which the truths are enwrapped will disgust many who might else grow to love physical science. But we are very sure that where this love exists it is always notoriously strong, and only needs awakening in any way whatsoever. Again, this mode of teaching would, of course, be used only with those who would have to learn French in the ordinary course of their education, and so would, we take it, care but little what was the translation-book on which they were employed. Besides, a great deal may be done *at home*, in those families where languages are begun early, by the help of such a book as that whose name stands second at the head of this article.

It is a most valuable work. Why our little linguists of both sexes should not use it largely, we cannot see, except that it does not appear to have got known much yet. A great deal has been written about the change in nursery and school-room books which was so general some years back. The old fairy-tale was superseded by the moral tale or the scientific dialogue, and then later came the child's religious novel. Here, too, there has been a reaction, and the old story-books are looking up again. But as we shall never quite oust the *science-made-easy* books, even if it were desirable to do so, it is well to secure that they be good of their kind; and all know who have tried how hard it is to write a child's book on any subject, not to speak of a scientific one. For our own part we think these books have their place in the library of the nursery governess. The little girl who read nothing but fairy-tales, and formed her principles

* The man, who could speak no German, but had been snapped up on account of his great height, was instructed to reply to the King's three general questions on parade, 'How old are you?' 'Three-and-twenty.' 'How long have you been in my service?' 'Three years.' 'Are you satisfied with your rations and lodging?' 'Both, your Majesty.' The King, however, took the very unusual course of inverting the order of his questions; and so, having heard that the three-year-old infant of six feet high had been twenty-three years in his service, he followed up his research by the inquiry, 'Are you a donkey, or am I?' and was answered, 'Both, your Majesty.'

accordingly, would have a great deal to unlearn by-and-by. Nor would she be much better prepared for the world (nay, much worse in some points) who was fed exclusively with the good little books of which all the churches and sects supply us with such shoals. This stuffing the imagination with untrue stories needs to be done carefully and with judgment. As is done for the body, the food should be varied: a mixed diet suits the brain better than any one kind, however nourishing. And if there is to be a mixture of science in sport along with the other ingredients, we know of no pleasanter or more useful way of taking it than through the pages of M. Jean Macé's 'History of a Mouthful of Bread.' Thus the two works named belong to a different class and aim at a different object. The 'Cours Élémentaire d'Histoire Naturelle à l'Usage des Collèges et des Maisons d'Éducation' forms a set of 'school and college manuals' very useful (a Professor of Anatomy at one of our universities assures us that there is no book equal to it for school purposes in the English language), to be taken up by elder boys chiefly. Some of the series have been translated, others adapted for English use; and both kinds are finding their way into schools. What we contend for is, that the French book itself should be used in schools where French is taught (and it surely ought to be taught to every boy in most of our grammar-schools); above all, that it should be used in those grammar-schools in which, from various causes, the work is rapidly becoming that of *middle* schools, in which, in point of fact, it would seem mischievous as well as hopeless to try to keep up a high classical standard for all, or even for the majority of the boys. In this way we shall secure for the sons of our tradesmen and humbler professional men, first, a good text-book for French translation. The French of the manuals is very much more like that of ordinary conversation than extracts from Lamartine, Châteaubriand, &c., which form the staple of many of the Recueils, and which are often as much like the spoken language as Hervey's 'Meditations amongst the Tombs' are like the English of everyday society; so the change, or, at any rate, the mixture of something more real, would in itself be no small benefit. Next, we shall secure certain definite notions on the subject taken up. We all know what a help the labour which a foreign language imposes is to clearness of thought; how it stops that slipshod way of reading into which we are too often betrayed when taking up an English scientific treatise. What Oxford man does not rejoice that the Ethics are in Greek? Who would like to take up Plato even from Dr. Whewell's admirable adaptation? And, again, we should secure special accuracy, as far as we went, from the well-known character of the French mind. That

'nation of stampers,' as Sir F. Head called them, carry out their *system* and their perspicuity in nothing more thoroughly than in their elementary books. 'Science' has a great work still to accomplish through the help of our schools. It has to substitute clear notions, accurate as far as they go, for the hazy ideas which most even of educated Englishmen have formed about questions of natural science. It has to prove that the elements of those subjects, in which no success can be hoped for without the closest research, the most rigid induction, need not be taught in such a desultory way that it becomes a question whether the teaching does good or harm. Just now, too, 'science' has to stand its ground against the reaction of which we spoke, as well as against the indifference which is the result of bad teaching and of the collapse of too grand expectations. We think that it can strengthen its position by taking in a modern language as an ally. But even if this is thought undesirable, or for schools in general impossible, still the '*Bouchée de Pain*' will be found most useful in those many families where the boys and girls go on working for some time together, and where, as is so often the case in Edinburgh, the boys, going to a day-school, have extra French lessons at home, for some years at least. To a brief notice of this excellent book we shall now devote ourselves, just premising that there is a great and unquestionable advantage in giving *girls* clear notions about physical phenomena. This is not the place to open up the vexed question of female labour, or to talk of lady-photographers (many there are, by the way, and some among the most successful), or of female dyers and bleachers, female M.D.'s, and female M.A.'s at the London University. But putting this altogether aside, most women will be mothers; and no one who has been much with children can fail to have been struck by the pertinent questions which they constantly ask about what they see in the world of nature. As they grow up the questions get fewer; for, in general, the little inquirers are either repressed by parents who do not care to show their own ignorance, or else chilled and baffled by the manifest inadequacy (manifest even to their apprehension) of the reason which is hesitatingly assigned. Here is the mother's opportunity. She is from necessity the earliest teacher. How seldom has she the stuff in her to fit her for her heaven-assigned office. We heard, the other day, a little fellow of very average quickness puzzle mother, and all, most wofully by the question, 'Why does the rain come down in drops, mamma? How is it that it doesn't all pour down with a slop and a splash, as when we pour it out of a bucket?' We verily believe some of the adults who heard him would, if hard pressed, have fallen

back on the gigantic shower-bath principle, and have suggested that the solid firmament on high was provided with a sort of double bottom, one pierced with holes, through which the rain came when Providence, pulling the string, withdrew the covering-plate. Seriously, we know many mammas who could give their children a fair notion of the difference between Arian and Sabellian, who are strong in theological terminology, and take care to instruct their babes in the wars of Joshua and the wickedness of the Amalekites—nay, are far too fond of giving them an insight into the passing controversies of the day, making young Biblical critics of them—while, at the same time, they cannot tell them the name of the simplest wild flower which they bring in from the hill-side. Dissect a flower! mamma would as soon think of dissecting a hedgehog. Why, she has never marked the distinctions between forest-trees; how, just as each has a different-natured wood, adapted to different uses, so each has a different type of growth and a different shade of green, not merely in spring-time, but all the year through. Her ignorance is due to various causes: to the strangely impractical education in ladies' schools, which teaches girls more about the bread-fruit tree and the iguana than about the alder and the field-mouse; to the ignorance of instructors, who, knowing nothing of these things themselves, divert, if possible, their pupils' minds into the wide steppes of ancient history and the like, where you can keep on at a hand-gallop, just taking in what the book says, and are not stopped every minute by difficult questions, as you are in the devious paths of science; to a false sentimentalism, which has led such studies to be looked on as petty and degrading. How often is that line of Wordsworth's,—

‘One who could peep and botanize upon his mother's grave,’

quoted against the observer of nature by people who forget the ‘Celandine’ and the thousand and one passages in Wordsworth which prove his love of nature and keen research into her mysteries. The present Laureate cannot be misquoted in this way. How often in half a line he sums up the chief characteristics of a plant, for instance, in a way which shows the naturalist's eye. No sane man would deny that the mothers of the next generation will do more good in awakening thought, in forming habits of close inquiry and practical questioning of nature, if they can get a little insight into physical truths. This need not exclude any of the subjects at present learned. The girl who reads ‘L'Histoire d'une Bouchée de Pain’ instead of her French story-book will not lose in French—rather she will

gain infinitely ; for the work is not in *book-French*, but in colloquial language—and at the same time she will be reading a subject on which she will not be able to help talking usefully with her brothers, about which she will not be able to help THINKING ; while what Lucien said to Charles, and how both of them teased *la petite* Jacqueline's Minie, are perhaps just as well forgotten the moment the lesson is over. This plan of combining the modern language with the lesson in the principles of science accounts for our having so strongly recommended M. Macé's little work. Not that there are no good books of the same kind in English (though neither 'The House We Live in,' nor Mrs. Marcet's many books, nor Miss Zornlin's, nor any which we have seen, are so well arranged or so compendious), but that there seems an actual advantage in the use of the French reading-book for reasons explained before, and which, if strong in the case of grammar-school boys, are doubly strong in the case of young ladies, who, as a matter of course, learn a great deal of French, and often to very little purpose. The yellow-covered book, coarsely printed—as Browning says, 'Your crapulous French novel, on grey paper, with blurred type'—and the smart, little, piquant tome of the '*Bibliothèque des Chemins de Fer*,' would be less often let into drawing-rooms (thrust under sofa-pillows when a visitor calls or Aunt Deborah comes down) if the girls got their first insight into French from a work which would show them practically that that great nation still has a worthy literature ; and if this were the result papas and husbands would not surely have ground for grumbling.

And now a few words about the book itself. Let us hear M. Macé, in his Introduction :—

'I am undertaking, my dear little girl, to explain to you many things which people generally think very hard to be understood, and which grand young ladies do not always get taught to them. If we manage, by putting our two heads together, to get these matters into your head, I shall be very proud for my part, and you will see how very amusing for little girls is that "science" of our learned men, which the said learned men sometimes pretend is so dry and uninteresting. The history of a mouthful of bread ! If that's all I've got to tell you about, you'll say, it is not worth the trouble : you know all about it just as much as I do, and don't want me to teach you the way to take a bite out of a tart. Ah ! you know nothing of the incredible quantity of facts which underlie these few words, and what a huge book we might make if I wished to enter into all the details. . . . Why do you eat ? Have you ever asked yourself that question ? You will say, We eat because there are cakes, and sweetmeats, and pears, and fancy bread, and all sorts of things nice to eat. That's all very fine ; but suppose there was nothing

but soup in the world, how then? for papa and mamma can tell you that there are numbers of poor little children who never get anything else but soup, and yet they eat, and with excellent appetite too, I assure you. What's the reason?'

Then follows a lucid account of the process of assimilation, ending thus:—

'You'll agree with me that there are not many fairy-stories more marvellous than the history of the jam tart which becomes little girl, the bread-and-milk which becomes pet cat, the grass which becomes ox. I say history, for it is in reality a lengthy history: you can very well imagine, indeed, that all this is not done all at once. Perhaps you've heard of those admirable machines which they use in England, and which at one end take in the cotton just fresh from the bale (just as you see it in wadding), and give it out at the other end in the form of fine calico, all ready folded and packed, and fit to be given to the shopkeepers. Well, you have inside you a still more admirable machine, which receives your bun or your jam tart, and gives it back to you transformed into nails, hair, bones, flesh, many other things besides; for there are a thousand things in your body which are not the least bit like one another, and which you are constantly making without knowing it. And a very happy thing, too, that it is so; for what would become of little girls if they had to think from morning to night of all that has to be made and done in their bodies? How glad the mammas would be if they could get a machine which should sweep the rooms, get the dinner ready, wash the plates, mend the clothes, manage everything that mammas have now to think so much about, and all without making any more noise than your machine does, which has been at work ever since you've been in the world, and which, perhaps, you've never troubled your head about at all. . . . Other animals—dog, frog, oyster—all have this same machine, but in different degrees of perfection; just as in factories all spinning-machines are made on the same principle, but there is a special arrangement for those which spin cotton, another for spinning wool, another for flax, and so on. Or again, your mamma's beautiful moderator lamp: take off the shade, the globe, the chimney which prevents its smoking, the tube which carries the wick, the screw which raises and lowers it; take them all off one by one—why, nothing is left but a wick floating in oil. Yet it is your lamp for all that, though it does not burn so well; and though a stranger coming in would not know it, you, who picked it to pieces, know all about it. And so if we examine the machine in every animal, one after another, we shall find (what the person who has not followed the successive changes cannot recognise when one shows him the result) that it is the same machine in all. . . . You may say you've been eating all your life without troubling yourself about it, and still you've got on very well, just as your little cat does, who neither knows nor cares about the *why* of these things. Ah,

but the cat is a cat, and you are a little girl; and it is only in learning what the cat does not know that you will raise yourself above her. . . . They sometimes tell great boys and girls that it is never too late to learn; but they may just as well remind children that it is never too soon to learn. And among matters which children *can* learn, what I want to teach you has the twofold merit of being amusing, to begin with, and also (which is more important) of accustoming you to think of God by making known to you the marvels which he has made.'

Then, in a series of letters, written with admirable simplicity, M. Macé proceeds to treat of the hand, the teeth, the heart, carbon, combustion, &c.: seven-and-twenty letters on the processes of digestion and kindred matters, followed by eleven letters on animals and their classification. Four hundred pages of the small, neat print of the 'Collection Hetzel' would frighten any teacher of children but for the remarkable fitness for young minds which the whole displays. Two or three extracts will prove this more fully. He can bring out a moral:—

'This hand of yours, so necessary to you, every time you look at it remember that you have to educate it, in order to pay a debt of honour, and that you must make haste to render it fit for something, that people may not be able to say any longer that you are no good for anything. . . . Think, too, that you are under great obligations to other men, to almost everybody, and perhaps under the greatest obligations to those whom you're tempted to make fun of. That countryman, in his smock-frock and thick wooden shoes, whom you're disposed to laugh at, it is his coarse hand which has produced all those good things which you have to eat. That workman, why you would be afraid to touch his black, dirty hand; yet it is in making things for you that his hand has got dirty and black. And don't be thinking you're an important little personage compared to these men: remember you're not yet any use at all; for you want everything, and nobody wants you.'

In the style of allegory M. Macé is singularly happy.

'Every large country-house has a steward or bailiff: our body has also its steward. But what a steward—how active he is; how he turns his attention to everything—why, the stewards of great lords are nothing compared to him. He comes and goes; he is everywhere at once, and that not by a mere figure of speech, as when you speak of a very active man: in this case the "everywhere at once" is a reality. Our steward has everything, not in his store-rooms, but, what is far better, in his pockets, and he empties them by degrees everywhere as he goes along, never making a wrong estimate of what he ought to give out, never stopping, but coming back for fresh supplies, without ever growing weary, every minute of the day and of the night. Ah, if you knew how many workmen he has under his control, who work without ever "knocking off," who come to him

each one of them for something quite different from the rest, and who never play over their work, oh dear no! No use saying to them, "Stop a minute." They don't know what it is to stop: you must keep on supplying, supplying, supplying to the end of the chapter. By-and-by we shall have a good deal to say about this wonderful steward: he is called *the Blood* One fine morning he came upon the rudiments of teeth in your head, asking to be put in a condition to work, and straightway he began with them his distribution of stores. They wanted lime and phosphorus: he took lime and phosphorus out of his pockets. . . . Now, when your teeth began to shoot you know very well you never ate lime and phosphorus, for nothing but milk ever entered your mouth.'

And so on. But it is in vain to try to reproduce in translation the graceful simplicity of the original. The stomach is a cook who knows his business. Fire is the marriage fête of the great king Oxygen with other substances; but then sometimes Oxygen has his weaknesses, like Louis XIV.; and *rust*, instead of fire, is the marriage with Scarron's widow, dull and noiseless: they didn't illuminate Versailles for that. The chapter on animal heat is singularly clear. The writer cannot help a joke at the expense of the English, though indeed he has a perfect right to say what he does, for all of us know that it is no joke at all to the sufferers.

'The Englishman goes to India. He takes his beef and his rum with him. He quietly stuffs that inside stove that we've been speaking about almost as if he were at home. You'd fancy he would set the house on fire: not a bit of it. Put the thermometer into his mouth: it will only mark just as high as inside the mouths of feeders on rice. The fact is, the stove is wiser than its owner: it just burns as much hydrogen and carbon as it wants, and troubles itself no more about the rest than if it had not been eaten. But, you will ask, what becomes of the rest, if it is not burnt? You remember when I told you what the bile and the liver were, that we put off what more we had to say about them till we had talked of the lungs and of breathing. Now is the time to finish about them. *The liver* gets hold of all the hydrogen and carbon which the oxygen does not burn in the blood, and finds employment for it in making bile. Well then, the more hydrogen and carbon there is for which there is no employment in the blood, the more bile the liver makes, and that's all about it. When once the body has reached its *heat point* you may heap up firing as much as you please, but you won't make it any hotter. All you will do will be to cut out more work for the liver; and the poor thing can't do more than it can. So what happens at last to our great English eaters?* The bile-manufacturer, whom

* 'Comme ils mangent, ces Anglais!' We all remember the picture in 'Punch.' It is amusing that even into a child's Science-made-easy the Frenchman must drag in his quiet joke about our gormandizing habits.

they overload with work, gets worn out, and gives in at last, and they return home with liver-complaint.'

Of course M. Macé sometimes shoots over the head of his little correspondent. In one place he does so wilfully: 'Hand over this page, dear, to your papa,' says he, and then goes on to give his idea that each of the blood-globules is an animated being, and that our life is the mysterious resultant of these millions of little lives, each of which is insignificant in itself, just as the great life of a people is composed of a crowd of existences which have no individual importance.

'Take, for instance, our dear country, where the union of five-and-thirty millions of brains, which are not all of the highest power exactly, forms the majestic brain of a people the most intelligent in the world, in their own eyes at least.'

This is the only fancy we have met with in the book. It is amusingly French, in the way in which it sacrifices the individual to the community, but for this very reason, harmless here in England, where the danger is rather of sacrificing the community to the individual. The second part, on animals, is very beautiful, full of facts, taking note of the very newest discoveries, simple enough for the youngest capacity, and yet just as *entraînant* for older readers as Michelet's celebrated 'La Mer, L'Oiseau,' &c. without the slightest tinge of that over-warm colouring which makes one chary of putting Michelet into youthful hands. His object is to prove, as he says,—

'A uniform plan in the animal machine in all essentials; so that the definition of an animal is a digestive tube (or alimentary canal) furnished with organs. The first essential is that the creature should eat: all else is merely to help it to eat better, to get its food more easily, to get the most out of it. *The walking-machine*, then, is only an auxiliary; and one cannot decide from it whether God made three, four, or five kinds of animals, or if he only made one. . . . But though man is an animal as to his bodily mechanism, assuredly he is something else by virtue of that Divine gleam which shines in him, and which I shall not attempt to define, for it does not readily submit to definition.'

'Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God. . . . Eat away then, like a pretty little animal as you are. But don't forget to nourish also that other part of your being, which is *the chief and most important part*.'

So much for a book which has only to be read to be liked and adopted by all classes of readers, and the writer of which has certainly fulfilled M. St. Hilaire's prediction about him, mentioned in the brief Dedication: 'Vous en aviez promis un avenir de naturaliste.' Once more let us urge on parents the duty of

fixing their children's *ideas*, as the French say, in reference to natural phenomena. We all know how strikingly Mr. Buckle, in his second volume, painted the evils which resulted in Spain from an utter ignorance of these matters. Doubtless there is no such fear for England; still we have our own dangers. Were we as well grounded as we might easily be in these matters, the fallacies, the juggling with 'Law,' 'Nature,' 'Sequence,' &c., which Mr. Buckle employs, would not have deceived so many. Again, female education among us is not growing more sound and practical, though there seems to be a general awakening to its present worthlessness. Women are and ought to be the earliest teachers: to them we owe the lessons we never forget. Can the man who thinks calmly about these things fail to notice the vast number of educated women (not to speak of the uneducated, who mostly know simply nothing at all of such things) who have strangely wrong and indistinct notions about even the commonest of common things. In one direction, indeed, there is mental activity enough, nay far too much, among women. On the one hand we have rabid controversialists, joining recklessly with the most reckless impugnors of our faith, tending to sap the faith of unreflecting minds by their miserable quibbles and bringing up of old exploded sophisms and doubts long since set at rest. On the other hand we find sisterhoods running into extremes of asceticism, marring the grand object of earnest well-doing which they have set before themselves by the phantasies which they take up along with it, and which they think even more important than the work itself. And then, outside these regulars of the great theological army, there are the free companies, of Mormonites and such-like among the poorer and less educated, of Spiritualists (shame that they should misuse such a word) among those who ought for every reason to be ashamed of the lengths to which they have suffered themselves to be led. Surely, not women only, but men require sound scientific teaching, when both can be drawn away as they have been by the confident pretensions of charlatans who seemed bent on setting up inconsistency instead of order as the rule of things.

When will the time come for all of us, and not for our scientific men only, to look on nature as a great whole, not working by dead law, but by the will of God? As Tennyson says, 'Nothing is that errs from law;' but then what is that which we call law, but the expression of the will of God in regard to matter so far as our observation has enabled us to determine it? At present very few people know anything at all about physics. Let any pompous pretender come to them and talk of 'uniform sequence,' 'laws of Nature,' and such-like, and instead of being able to gauge what these expressions are worth,

they straightway get quite dazed. They are not able to fix the bounds of nature, because they have had no training in natural science. To give them this training is the very surest way of making such books as 'Incidents in My Life,' by Mr. Home, harmless, of taking the poison out of such books as Mr. Buckle's 'History of Civilization.' People will then know how far nature can go, what cases *law* will meet, and what it will not meet.

A boy controversialist! a boy spirit-rapper! one shrinks alike from the idea of either. We do not hope to make all our boys natural philosophers, but we feel that in regard to this matter what Lord Palmerston has just said at Glasgow is very true, 'A little knowledge is far better than none at all.'

This, then, is what we must aim at, to give every one some grounding in physics; and we are quite sure such a plan as we have sketched out for bringing the systematic teaching of physics into the home lesson-room and the grammar-school would tend very much to bring about this most desirable consummation. For the 'Cours Élémentaire' is not less clear and perspicuous than the 'Bouchée de Pain:' wherever any one of the series is introduced it will be sure to approve itself a good substitute for the ordinary 'Selections.' Sydney Smith says a hundred years are a very short time for the duration of a national error. When are we to look for the cessation of two capital errors in the present teaching of the middle classes—the forcing too much Latin and Greek on boys to whom it will be worse than useless by-and-by, for it will disgust some of them with books altogether, and the teaching what is perhaps the most useful of modern languages in such a way that (even where it is *well* learned, according to the system) it is available for little, except for lazily skimming through fugitive literature? This is not what we want our boys and girls who learn French to do. We want them to talk, to study the real literature of a great and progressive people. We want our boys (in these days of international exhibitions and such-like) to be able to exchange thoughts with French chemists and agriculturalists, to *use*, in short, the language which they have learned. We do not doubt that scientific teaching will make way more and more in English schools: it cannot fail of doing so in a country like this, the very life of which is bound up with invention and scientific discovery. What we want to set teachers on their guard about is the growing reaction against the 'useful knowledge' idea. They can conquer this reaction by guarding against old mistakes and by taking up new allies; and we are convinced that they will find no more efficient ally than a good sound French elementary treatise, which shall give the new matter without displacing any of the old school subjects.

IV.

THE POETRY OF ROBERT BROWNING.*

WE suppose many readers will be glad to receive this judiciously compiled little volume ; it sets in a clear and admirable light the distinguished genius of the second of our great English living poets, who might be first but for the native impatience of artist forms and settings. Few selections with which we are acquainted more faithfully render the genius of an author. At the same time, it is perhaps necessary to say that it is compiled with the author's sanction, but without his knowledge of the especial selections. For ourselves, we usually have but few words of praise to give to selections, but this seems necessary for those whose minds claim any relationship of sympathy with this author, and it will be a most admirable and pleasant companion for leisure hours and recreative travels.

Robert Browning is one of the least known of our great modern writers, although his name has been now so long before the world ; yet it may perhaps be questioned whether, with all his native prodigality and munificent endowment of thought, scholarship, and genius, he is not better known as the husband of Mrs. Browning than by the productions of his own pen. He is now in about his fifty-third year, and far as his verses rise above the cockney school of literature, so much the subject of the sneers of the fine-gentlemen critics, he is a Londoner by birth ; born in Camberwell, educated in the then especially pleasant little village of Dulwich. The broad and liberal tone of his mind, which never degenerates into the cant of Church-of-Englandism, may perhaps be in some measure attributed to the fact, that as a scholar he graduated at the London University. His first effort as a poet—'Pauline'—we suppose has passed from everybody's recollection. Its author does not seem desirous that it should be retained. We have never seen it. We suppose it gives no evidence of its author's powers. Nearly thirty years have passed by since the publication of 'Paracelsus,' a most extraordinary poem to read now. It is not wonderful that it was received with chilling coldness then. At that time

* *Selections from the Poetical Works of Robert Browning.* Chapman and Hall.

our country had no audience for that kind of literature. It is intensely subjective. Much has been done since : Wordsworth has been appreciated, and Tennyson has risen ; teaching the cultivation of this poetry of thought. At the time of its publication there was neither school nor class ; only here and there existed a solitary mind able to appreciate, and with one or two favourable notices, it fell powerless from the press. The audience would be a small one disposed to read or to listen to it now. Soon after 'Paracelsus,' was published 'Sordello.' Again we have to confess our ignorance. This poem is out of print, and it probably never will be reprinted. We are willing to accept the verdict which pronounces it to be the most utterly and completely unintelligible poem in the English language. Our readers have probably met with a good story of Douglas Jerrold. 'In those days he was recruiting himself at Brighton. A parcel of books was sent him down from London, among the rest "Sordello." The health of the wit was shattered, and all books were forbidden excepting lighter fiction. But Mrs. Jerrold, or as one has expressed it, the "domestic lifeguards," was out of the way. The parcel was opened, and "Sordello" plunged into. When Mrs. Jerrold returned, she found her husband, to her horror, a cold sweat breaking out over his face, exclaiming, "I am mad, I am mad ! my mind is gone, I can make nothing of it." He put the book into her hand, and asked her to read, and as she read, he exclaimed, "Thank God, it's only gibberish, I am not mad after all !" ' This is a very well known and oft-repeated story. We suspect that it is only the judgment of that clever and brilliant wag, Jerrold ; but it shows the estimation in which the poem was held by contemporaries able to judge. On the contrary, Mr. Browning still insists to his friends that 'Sordello' is amongst the simplest and clearest poems in the English language. It was in 1846 Robert Browning married Elizabeth Barrett, thus furnishing no doubt one of the rarest and most charming instances of the happy marriage of equal and congenial poets. Their courtship was very short, and we give as apocryphal the statement that it commenced in a Greek note—exceedingly likely, for it was the favourite language of both ; Mr. Browning's mastery of the language is as well known as was his distinguished wife's ; though perhaps it was a joke of Jerrold's, who, when somebody was insisting that all persons should learn Greek, declared, 'Browning did worse than that, for he wrote Greek in short-hand.' How recently the earthly marriage has been dissolved our readers know. During the years of their married life they resided in Florence, and it is something of a drawback

to our exceeding admiration of, and gratitude to, both that England and English scenes and English life never seem to enter into the texture either of their genius, their sympathies, or their writings.

And here we touch at once the most prominent of those obstacles interfering with the fame of Robert Browning. He writes for men—for men and women—but not for Englishmen. He unconditions himself from those circumstances which would attract English readers, lives in other ages and other countries, and with a power we believe to be felicitously transparent and clear he seems to determine on making himself obscure. In this particular there is a contradiction between the essentially dramatic structure of his scenery and the magnificent dramatic grandeur of the passions he portrays and embodies, and the frequently involved tortuousness of his versification. A second thought shows us that this is indeed very natural to his peculiar genius. How he delights to work and worm and wind his way to the subtlest places of the soul, and to the mazy problems which the soul is perpetually seeking to solve! His knowledge is most recondite. Out-of-the-way magnificent scenes attract and claim and charm him—great historic incidents and historical characters, though great not by the rustle of the robe, or the clash of the armour along the chief streets of history, but by the exhibition they have made of the greatness of souls. He is a dramatist in all that we usually imply by that word, entering into the innermost arena of the being. His poems are, to quote the title of one of his dramas, 'Soul tragedies.' We trust we shall not be misunderstood when we say they present an order of tragedy differing from Shakspeare's—the agony, the strife, the internal stress are more internalised. He transfers the circumstances of our being from the *without* to the *within*. In this way they all become noble pictures of the striving and the attaining soul. 'Paracelsus' is one of the most extraordinary poems in our language—a tragedy, if a tragedy were ever written—but it has no incident, or but little. We have heard it mentioned by the side of Bailey's 'Festus'; it is likely to have done something in the production of 'Festus,' for it preceded it by many years. 'Paracelsus,' in the thought of the poet, no longer the Cagliostro of his age, but the great arch-priest of knowledge, falling into the frequent mistake of seeking to know and to enjoy at once,—a world-believer inoculated, as most great world-believers have been, with contempt for the world he relieves, longing at once to trample on yet save mankind, scorning their kindness while living on the opportunities of lifting them into the regions of knowledge and power. If man-

kind can be served, well, there all intercourse ends, determining never to be served by those whom he serves.

‘Like some knight traversing a wilderness,
Who, on his way, may chance to free a tribe
Of desert-people from their dragon-foe ;
When all the swarthy race press round to kiss
His feet, and choose him for their king, and yield
Their poor tents, pitched among the sand-hills, for
His realm ; and he points, smiling, to his scarf,
Heavy with riveled gold, his burgonet,
Gay set with twinkling stones—and to the east,
Where these must be displayed !’

No doubt, in reading ‘*Paracelsus*,’ the reader has to do very much himself ; it is by no means a poem for those whose verses must be thoughtless and sensuous. Abjuring all human love, Paracelsus breaks away from his friend Festus, the curate of Würzburg, the first scene depicting their parting conversation, he travelling away to cities, thirsting for knowledge, treating knowledge as the chief good of man, indulging in every kind of perplexed and difficult problem about God, Nature, Providence. Through a series of years the two friends meet together occasionally, and the poem is simply occupied with noting the progress of Paracelsus in his daring and dizzy pathway. The wild dreams and speculations and abstractions of Paracelsus involve the faith of his friend, Festus, who, in one of the interviews, implores him to remember—

‘Not our love alone,
But that my faith in God’s desire for man
To trust on his support (as I must think
You trusted) is obscured and dimmed thro’ you.’

Thus ‘*Paracelsus*,’ Mr. Browning’s longest poem, like most, may be not inappropriately described as a metaphysical or psychological dialogue. It is the picture of a great, noble, yet scornful mind, wrecked by its mere desire to know. In the last scene, a scene of ineffable beauty, Paracelsus is discovered on his death-bed, in a cell in the hospital of Salzburg, by Festus. In the first scene, Festus sat by the fireside with his wife ; she is gone now, which leads the dying man to the following beautiful and pathetic burst from his delirium :—

‘And she is gone ; sweet human love is gone !
’Tis only when they spring to heaven that angels
Reveal themselves to you ; they sit all day
Beside you, and lie down at night by you,
Who care not for their presence—muse or sleep—
And all at once they leave you and you know them !
We are so fooled, so cheated !’

Persecution, which haunted him during his life, and has dogged his name and shade ever since his death, has brought him to the pass of pain and delirious despair. Dying, however, the spirit becomes filled with music as a star is freighted with light. The dying man reviews his life and his mistakes in an autobiography as marvellously touching and true as it is overwhelmingly tender. Love and the love of God resumes its sway over a soul mere knowledge had wrecked. The whole of these dying words are a swell of the richest melody to the close, when faith exclaims—

‘If I stoop
Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
It is but for a time ; I press God’s lamp
Close to my breast—its splendour, soon or late,
Will pierce the gloom : I shall emerge one day !’

If our readers can do so, if they be devotees to knowledge—mere knowledge, which was the curse of Eden, and threatens to be the curse of our age—we would have them to read ‘Paracelsus.’ It is not the only one of Mr. Browning’s poems—rather it is one of many—in which he asserts, but not merely asserts, that love solves where knowledge perplexes. The same lesson is taught in ‘Saul,’ which, in its condensed and subdued majesty of expression, and its intricate subtlety in dealing with the most perplexed affairs of the human spirit, may rank among the most wonderful productions of the English language, too long to cite here, yet if we desired to read aloud that which would furnish the best illustration of the genius of Robert Browning, we would select ‘Saul.’ The poet seizes the period of Saul’s first madness, and his ambitious flight is no other nor less than to present those snatches and refrains, those subtle strokes of harmony and truth, by which the stripling David wound his way into the soul of the king, and disimprisoned and set it free :—

‘He is Saul, ye remember in glory,—ere error had bent
The broad brow from the daily communion ; and still, though much
 spent
Be the life and the bearing that front you, the same, God did choose,
To receive what a man may waste, desecrate, never quite lose.’

David has been sent for, famed young minstrel, harper, and poet, to visit and to charm the king :—

‘Said Abner, “At last thou art come ! Ere I tell, ere you speak,
Kiss my cheek, wish me well !” Then I wished it, and did kiss his
 cheek.
And he, “Since the King, O my friend, for thy countenance sent,
Neither drunken nor eaten have we ; nor until from his tent
Thou return with the joyful assurance the King liveth yet,
Shall our lips with the honey be bright, with the water be wet.

For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a space of three days,
Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants, of prayer or of praise,
To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have ended their strife,
And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch sinks back upon life."

In strong, short, clear verse, he describes how the young harper, having knelt down to the God of his fathers, ran along, lifting the unlooped tent, pulled up the obstructing spear, groped on his hands and knees to the second enclosure, felt his way to the fold and skirts, prayed once more, and entered, exclaiming, 'Here is David, thy servant,'—

'And no voice replied.

At the first I saw nought but the blackness; but soon I descried
A something more black than the blackness—the vast, the upright
Main prop which supports the pavilion: and slow into sight
Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest of all;—
Then a sunbeam, that burst through the tent-roof,—showed Saul.'

The king stood there agonized, drear, stark, blind, and dumb; not a muscle relaxed at the presence of the stripling; he hung there like a great king serpent caught in a pine. The effort of the harper was to recal and wake him from the trance of madness. What strain should he try? What song should he sing? Having removed the lilies from the chords of his harp, bound round them to prevent them from snapping with the stress of the noontide, he essayed the song of creatures, the song of the sheepfolds, the song loved by birds, or by the wild wood creatures in the brake, with the sweet morality—

'God made all the creatures, and gave them our love and our fear,
To give sign, we and they are his children, one family here.'

Then the young harper tries the song of the reapers, as the song of creatures has been waked in vain, and then the song of funerals, and then of marriage, and then, rising to a higher flight, the song of the Temple:—

'The chorus intoned

As the Levites go up to the altar in glory enthroned. . . .
But I stopped here—for here in the darkness, Saul groaned.'

The groan of the king is so far a conquest for the harp; there is something stirring and seeking a return to life, and the king shudders, and the sparkles dart from the jewels of his turban, from the rubies and the sapphires in the darkness; still it is a movement of the head, not of the body; the cataleptic rigidity holds it there still. Then comes a burst of higher music:—

'How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses, for ever in joy!'

The young minstrel 'becomes bolder, sings of the white locks of

Saul's father, the thin hands of his mother held up in attestation of God's faithfulness, even over the death bier. Then the song becomes personal—a rapid glance over the youth of the king, his boyhood of promise, and hope, and wonder :—

'Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch ; a people is thine ;
And all gifts which the world offers singly, on one head combine !
On one head, all the beauty and strength, love and rage, like the throe
That, a-work in the rock, helps its labour, and lets the gold go :
High ambition and deeds which surpass it, fame crowning it,—all
Brought to blaze on the head of one creature—King Saul !'

And how cunning the art of the poet in this, who, in the midst of such a train of associations, dexterously introducing in that burst the name of the king, restores him to the first real dawn of consciousness. Death was past, life not come, so he waited.

'What next should I urge
To sustain him where song had restored him ?'

Now comes the difficult part the minstrel has to play, and then come thronging the rife fancies indulged of old in the pastures—the sheep all round, the solitary eagle sweeping slowly, as if sleeping on the wing, and the young poet peopling the hollow in which he lay with thoughts and dreams of life—a life it seemed then, never to be mixed with the rules, the schemes, the uses of men, the courage that gains, the prudence that keeps. And now all these fancies coming back, old trains of vague thought giving the sentiments of assurance to the responses and the teachings of the harp, first the song rose to the thought of the worth of fame, mind rejecting the mere comforts of the mere mortal life ; then, the soul rising above sorrow, even as, though the palm tree be broken, stem and branch decaying, the palm wine remains to stanch the wounds of the spirit. So the king is invoked to remember that the fruit and the vintage of life is in deeds. The king, rising out of his trance, is called to look from the actual to the ideal. The first king of Judea is called to look out into the vale where the first king slumbers beneath his tomb, 'the grey mountain of marble heaped four square' commemorating great deeds, while the story of Saul, the great statesman, is told with the poet's sweet comment :—

'So the pen gives unborn generations their due and their part
In thy being ! Then, first of the mighty, thank God that thou art.'

Step by step the young poet wins his way to the king's heart. He sank and sat down, and presently his vast giant knees encircle the young singer, who reaches now the true height of

his inspiration, and our readers will thank us for quoting the remainder of the poem :—

‘Then the truth came upon me. No harp more—no song more! out-broke—

“I have gone the whole round of Creation: I saw and I spoke!
I, a work of God’s hand for that purpose, received in my brain
And pronounced on the rest of his handwork—returned him again
His creation’s approval or censure: I spoke as I saw.
I report, as a man may of God’s work—all’s love, yet all’s law!
Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me. Each faculty tasked
To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where a dewdrop was asked.
Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at wisdom laid bare.
Have I a forethought? how purblind, how blank, to the Infinite care!
Do I task any faculty highest, to image success?
I but open my eyes,—and perfection, no more and no less,
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod.
And thus looking within and around me I ever renew,
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too)
The submission of Man’s nothing-perfect to God’s All-Complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to his feet!
Yet with all this abounding experience, this Deity known,
I shall dare to discover some province, some gift of my own.
There’s one faculty pleasant to exercise, hard to hoodwink,
I am fain to keep still in abeyance (I laugh as I think),
Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, wot ye, I worst
E’en the Giver in one gift.—Behold! I could love if I durst!
But I sink the pretension as fearing a man may o’ertake
God’s own speed in the one way of love: I abstain, for love’s sake!
—What, my soul? see thus far and no farther? when doors great and
small,

Nine-and-ninety flew ope at our touch, should the hundredth appal?
In the least things, have faith, yet distrust in the greatest of all?
Do I find love so full in my nature, God’s ultimate gift,
That I doubt his own love can compete with it? here, the parts shift?
Here, the creature surpass the Creator, the end, what Began?—
Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for this man,
And dare doubt He alone shall not help him, who yet alone can?
Would it ever have entered my mind, the bare will, much less power,
To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the marvellous dower
Of the life he was gifted and filled with? to make such a soul,
Such a body, and then such an earth for insphering the whole!
And doth it not enter my mind (as my warm tears attest)
These good things being given, to go on, and give one more, the best?
Ay, to save and redeem and restore him, maintain at the height
This perfection,—succeed with life’s dayspring, death’s minute of night?
Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul, the mistake,
Saul, the failure, the ruin he seems now,—and bid him awake
From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life,—a new harmony yet
To be run, and continued, and ended—who knows?—or endure!
The man taught enough by life’s dream, of the rest to make sure.
By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning intensified bliss,
And the next world’s reward and repose, by the struggle in this.

“ I believe it! ’tis Thou, God, that givest, ’tis I who receive:
 In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to believe.
 All’s one gift: thou canst grant it moreover, as prompt to my prayer
 As I breathe out this breath, as I open these arms to the air.
 From thy will, stream the worlds, life and nature, thy dread Sabaoth:
 I will?—the mere atoms despise me! and why am I loth
 To look that, even that in the face too? why is it I dare
 Think but lightly of such impuissance? what stops my despair?
 This;—’tis not what man Does which exalts him, but what man
 Would do!

See the King—I would help him but cannot, the wishes fall through.
 Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich,
 To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would—knowing which,
 I know that my service is perfect.—Oh, speak through me now!
 Would I suffer for him that I love? So wilt Thou—so wilt Thou!
 So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost Crown—
 And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor down
 One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,
 Turn of eye, wave of hand, that Salvation joins issue with death!
 As thy love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved
 Thy power, that exists with and for it, of Being beloved!
 He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most
 weak.

’Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
 In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
 A face like my face that receives thee: a Man like to me,
 Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever! a Hand like this hand
 Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!”

I know not too well how I found my way home in the night.
 There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to left and to right,
 Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive—the aware—
 I repressed, I got through them as hardly, as strugglingly there,
 As a runner beset by the populace famished for news—
 Life or death. The whole earth was awakened, hell loosed with
 her crews;

And the stars of night beat with emotion, and tingled and shot
 Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge: but I fainted not.
 For the Hand still impelled me at once and supported—suppressed
 All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet, and holy behest,
 Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the earth sank to rest.
 Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had withered from earth—
 Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day’s tender birth;
 In the gathered intensity brought to the grey of the hills;
 In the shuddering forests’ new awe; in the sudden wind-thrills;
 In the startled wild beasts that bore off, each with eye sidling still
 Though averted, in wonder and dread; and the birds stiff and chill
 That rose heavily, as I approached them, made stupid with awe!
 E’en the serpent that slid away silent,—he felt the new Law.
 The same stared in the white humid faces upturned by the flowers;
 The same worked in the heart of the cedar, and moved the vine-bowers.
 And the little brooks witnessing murmured, persistent and low,
 With their obstinate, all but hushed voices—E’en so! it is so.’

From these quotations we surely may gather that Mr.
 Browning belongs in the highest sense to the poets of faith, even

in the delineations of some of the darkest ways of the soul this appears. One of his most extraordinary poems is 'Bishop Blougram's Apology,' a piece of remarkable logical and poetical strength, from which we are not going to quote a word, but of which we must say that, in its way, it is alone in poetry, as an expression of the casuistries of a sceptical epicurean who finds himself in a good place in the Church and determines to abide in it. We turn to another aspect of Mr. Browning's genius, his condensed, dramatic, passionate effect; indeed, in his shorter pieces, he seems to be master, as in the longer, at once of the power to startle with the mystical and subjective emotion or with the bold, passionate, and dramatic scene. We will present two well-known illustrations of this—well known, that is, to those who have been at all acquainted with the verses of Mr. Browning :—

'Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead,
Sit and watch by her side an hour.
That is her book-shelf, this her bed;
She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,
Beginning to die too, in the glass.
Little has yet been changed, I think—
The shutters are shut, no light may pass
Save two long rays through the hinge's chink.

'Sixteen years old when she died!
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name—
It was not her time to love: beside,
Her life had many a hope and aim,
Duties enough and little cares,
And now was quiet, now astir—
Till God's hand beckoned unawares,
And the sweet white brow is all of her.

'Is it too late, then, Evelyn Hope?
What, your soul was pure and true,
The good stars met in your horoscope,
Made you of spirit, fire and dew—
And just because I was thrice as old,
And our paths in the world diverged so wide,
Each was nought to each, must I be told?
We were fellow mortals, nought beside?

'No, indeed! for God above
Is great to grant, as mighty to make,
And creates the love to reward the love,—
I claim you still, for my own love's sake!
Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few—
Much is to learn and much to forget
Ere the time be come for taking you.

‘But the time will come,—at last it will,
 When, Evelyn Hope, what meant, I shall say,
 In the lower earth, in the years long still,
 That body and soul so pure and gay?
 Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,
 And your mouth of your own geranium’s red—
 And what you would do with me, in fine,
 In the new life come in the old one’s stead.

‘I have lived, I shall say, so much since then,
 Given up myself so many times.
 Gained me the gains of various men,
 Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes;
 Yet one thing, one, in my soul’s full scope,
 Either I missed or itself missed me—
 And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!
 What is the issue? let us see!

‘I loved you, Evelyn, all the while;
 My heart seemed full as it could hold—
 There was place and to spare for the frank young smile
 And the red young mouth and the hair’s young gold.
 So hush,—I will give you this leaf to keep—
 See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand.
 There, that is our secret! go to sleep;
 You will wake, and remember, and understand.’

This extract will itself be sufficient to illustrate at once the peculiar and subtle genius of the poet, and the indisposition of most readers to concede a deference to his claims upon their regard. Only a mind tolerant to the more familiar aspects of the life to come could read with pleasure, or permit to be read at all, such verses as these. We should expect to see in most faces a smile while they were perused, greeting as the sheerest nonsense the last line :—

‘You will wake, and remember, and understand.’

Far more apprehensible to our Protestant tastes are the following, and vehement passion can seldom find a more intense utterance :—

‘It is a lie—their Priests, their Pope,
 Their Saints, their . . . all they fear or hope
 Are lies, and lies—there! through my door
 And ceiling, there! and walls and floor,
 There, lies, they lie, shall still be hurled,
 Till spite of them I reach the world!

‘You think Priests just and holy men!
 Before they put me in this den,
 I was a human creature too,
 With flesh and blood like one of you,
 A girl that laughed in beauty’s pride
 Like lilies in your world outside.

'I had a lover—shame avaunt!
This poor wrenched body, grim and gaunt,
Was kissed all over till it burned,
By lips the truest, love e'er turned
His heart's own tint: one night they kissed
My soul out in a burning mist.

'So, next day when the accustomed train
Of things grew round my sense again,
"That is a sin," I said—and slow
With downcast eyes to church I go.
And pass to the confession-chair,
And tell the old mild father there.

'But when I falter Beltran's name,
"Ha?" quoth the father; "much I blame
The sin; yet wherefore idly grieve?
Despair not,—strenuously retrieve!
Nay, I will turn this love of thine
To lawful love, almost divine.

'“For he is young, and led astray,
This Beltran, and he schemes, men say,
To change the laws of church and state;
So, thine shall be an angel's fate,
Who, ere the thunder breaks, should roll
Its cloud away and save his soul.

'“For, when he lies upon thy breast,
Thou mayst demand and be possessed
Of all his plans, and next day steal
To me, and all those plans reveal,
That I and every priest, to purge
His soul, may fast and use the scourge.”

'That father's beard was long and white.
With love and truth his brow seemed bright;
I went back, all on fire with joy,
And, that same evening, bade the boy
Tell me, as lovers should, heart-free,
Something to prove his love of me.

'He told me what he would not tell
For hope of Heaven or fear of Hell;
And I lay listening in such pride,
And, soon as he had left my side,
Tripped to the church by morning-light
To save his soul in his despite.

'I told the father all his schemes,
Who were his comrades, what their dreams;
“And now make haste,” I said, “to pray
The one spot from his soul away:
To-night he comes, but not the same
Will look!” At night he never came.

- 'Nor next night : on the after-morn,
 I went forth with a strength new-born :
 The church was empty : something drew
 My steps into the street : I knew
 It led me to the market-place—
 Where, lo,—on high—the father's face !
- 'That horrible black scaffold drest—
 The stapled block ... God sink the rest !
 That head strapped back, that blinding vest,
 Those knotted hands and naked breast—
 Till near one busy hangman pressed—
 And—on the neck these arms caressed.....
- 'No part in aught they hope or fear !
 No Heaven with them, no Hell,—and here,
 No earth, not so much space as pens
 My body in their worst of dens
 But shall bear God and Man my cry—
 Lies—lies, again—and still, they lie !'

Quotations like these, and they are abundant enough in Mr. Browning's works, show his great variety of power. There are still some other characteristics we should notice. We have already referred, as one of the chief objections to Mr. Browning's style, to its involved character ; and the famous poem which has received Mr. Ruskin's warm eulogy, 'The Bishop orders his tomb at St. Praxed's,' is an illustration of this. A hazy gorgeousness, suffusing stained-glass glory, is not only the impression in this, but in many other poems. It is light seen through a prison ; and the strange and quaint images introduced, the determination utterly to abandon the ordinary train of symbol and metaphor, and the selection of such most likely to strike the eye and mind in quaint old Continental towns, in cool marble Italian cities, in their middle-age churches, vast and awful, in quaint and exciting old chronicles. These are the fountains of Mr. Browning's imagery. Perhaps some, too, would object to him, that the very originality of his genius frequently gives to his treatment of subjects a newness which is doubtful truth. We have a special instance of this in his treatment of the well-known story of the Glove and the Lion, the incident of King Francis' Court. Whereas all tradition has given to the lady the worst of it, Browning turns the tables, makes the lover of the lady to be one, the truth of whose protestations she had long doubted—who had often given to her endless descriptions of the death he would brave for her sake, and whom now she, having long seen the hollowness of, put to the test. The Knight, it seems, according to the version of the poet, soon married, and thereupon happens a very different story of bravery and cowardice:—

‘That he wooed and won . . . How do you call her?
The beauty, that rose in the sequel
To the King’s love, who loved her a week well;
And ’twas noticed he never would honour
De Lorge (who looked daggers upon her)
With the easy commission of stretching
His legs in the service, and fetching
His wife, from her chamber, those straying
Sad gloves she was always mislaying,
While the King took the closet to chat in,—
But of course this adventure came pat in:
And never the King told the story,
How bringing a glove brought such glory,
But the wife smiled—“His nerves are grown firmer—
Mine he brings now and utters no murmur.”’

Sometimes this disposition of originality results in a most pleasant happiness of suggestion, such as the epistle of Karshish, containing the strange medical experience of an Arab physician who had met with Lazarus, whom Christ had raised from the dead. This curiosity of knowledge perpetually flows out in curiosity of thought and style. We have another remarkable illustration of this in ‘Pippa Passes,’ the story of an Italian beggar or peasant girl, whose simple movement affects the character and destiny of every person she passes in the play, and it is truly one of the most singular illustrations of what we must call the subtlety of our author’s genius. It is this subtlety, too, which places him at a greater remove from what is ordinarily conceived of the character of the poet. He not merely seems to disdain the artist function too much, but too much he dwells upon the psychological analogies and distinctions; they so predominate that they make him comparatively unreadable by the ordinary crowd, who, as in everything else, so most especially in poetry, renounce all that calls for labour. With this, however, it must be said that Mr. Browning has a measureless command over versification and language. It rolls on like a great tide, and sweeps up and fills every little bay, or creek, or brook. His versification sometimes runs, sometimes rushes; he is not very particular out of what language he fetches his rhythms, Greek, Latin, Italian, or French. Frequently they are very new. His versification cannot always be said to be happy. Sometimes, again, it is most felicitous in softness and in strength. The story of ‘The Statue and the Bust’ illustrates this—one of those Italian traditions with which those cities abound. A husband, suspecting his wife of some partiality to the Duke, immured her in her chamber for life, from the day of their marriage. When he told her his will, she had determined to fly to the Duke, and the Duke had determined again to attempt to win the lady. On either side the deed died in

the thought, the lady passed her days in her palace, but when the first grey hairs streaked her brow, before her beauty faded, she sent for a sculptor to execute her bust. The Duke, it is to be supposed, forgot the lady, reigned his careless and easy reign, but before he died sent for a sculptor to execute his statue for the city square. There, in the square, stands the statue, and there, in the window of the palace opposite, stands the bust, from which little circumstance Mr. Browning weaves, through a most charming measure, the story, and deduces this most solemn moral :—

- ‘ So! while these wait the trump of doom,
How do their spirits pass, I wonder,
Night and days in the narrow room?
- ‘ Still, I suppose, they sit and ponder
What a gift life was, ages ago,
Six steps out of the chapel yonder.
- ‘ Surely they see not God, I know,
Nor all that chivalry of His,
The soldier-saints who, row in row,
- ‘ Burn upward each to his point of bliss—
Since, the end of life being manifest,
He had cut his way through the world to this.
- ‘ I hear your reproach—“ But delay was best,
For their end was a crime!”—Oh, a crime will do
As well, I reply, to serve for a test,
- ‘ As a virtue golden through and through,
Sufficient to vindicate itself
And prove its worth at a moment’s view.
- ‘ Must a game be played for the sake of self?
Where a button goes, ’twere an epigram
To offer the stamp of the very Guelph.
- ‘ The true has no value beyond the sham.
As well the counter as coin, I submit,
When your table’s a hat, and your prize, a dram.
- ‘ Stake your counter as boldly every whit,
Venture as truly, use the same skill,
Do your best, whether winning or losing it,
- ‘ If you choose to play—is my principle!
Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life’s set prize, be it what it will!
- ‘ The counter our lovers staked was lost
As surely as if it were lawful coin:
And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
- ‘ Was, the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
Though the end in sight was a crime, I say.
You of the virtue (we issue join),
How strive you? *De te, fabula!*

We must draw our article to a close with a searching sense of its great inequality to the worth of the subject of it ; but before we do so, we may refer briefly to Mr. Browning's last poem, 'Christma Eve and Easter Day,' and here we should certainly say, that the compilers of the selection have scarcely been just to the intention of Mr. Browning in the poem. They have, indeed, given 'Mount Zion Chapel, at Love Lane,' and the 'Pulpit at Göttingen,' and 'St. Peters at Rome,' and the first quotation especially looks like a satire upon all conventicles. It does not at all transpire, as in the poem, that the conventicle furnishing the water of life answers its purpose a great deal better than the lecture room, which only furnishes a myth, or the building, which only provides a raree-show. We would have liked to have seen the following quoted :—

'Ha ! Is God mocked, as He asks ?
Shall I take on me to change His tasks,
And dare, despatched to a river-head
For a simple draught of the element,
Neglect the thing for which He sent,
And return with another thing instead ?—
Saying ... " Because the water found
Welling up from underground,
Is mingled with the taints of earth,
While Thou, I know, dost laugh at dearth,
And couldest, at a word, convulse
The world with the leap of its river-pulse,—
Therefore I turned from the ooziings muddy,
And bring thee a chalice I found, instead :
See the brave veins in the breccia ruddy !
One would suppose that the marble bled.
What matters the water ? A hope I have nursed,
That the waterless cup will quench my thirst.
—Better have knelt at the poorest stream
That trickles in pain from the straitest rift !
For the less or the more is all God's gift,
Who blocks up or breaks wide the granite-seam.
And here, is there water or not, to drink ?
I, then, in ignorance and weakness,
Taking God's help, have attained to think
My heart does best to receive in meekness
This mode of worship, as most to his mind,
Where earthly aids being cast behind,
His All in All appears serene,
With the thinnest human veil between,
Letting the mystic Lamps, the Seven,
The many motions of His spirit,
Pass, as they list, to earth from Heaven.
For the preacher's merit or demerit,
It were to be wished the flaws were fewer
In the earthen vessel, holding treasure,
Which lies as safe in a golden ewer ;

But the main thing is, does it hold good measure?
 Heaven soon sets right all other matters!—
 Ask, else, these ruins of humanity,
 This flesh worn out to rags and tatters,
 This soul at struggle with insanity,
 Who thence take comfort, can I doubt,
 Which an empire gained, were a loss without.
 May it be mine! And let us hope
 That no worse blessing befall the Pope,
 Turn'd sick at last of the day's buffoonery,
 Of his posturings and his petticoatings,
 Beside the Bourbon bully's gloatings
 In the bloody orgies of drunk poltroonery!
 Nor may the Professor forego its peace
 At Göttingen, presently, when, in the dusk
 Of his life, if his cough, as I fear, should increase,
 Prophesied of by that horrible husk;
 And when, thicker and thicker, the darkness fills
 The world through his misty spectacles,
 And he gropes for something more substantial
 Than a fable, myth, or personification,
 May Christ do for him, what no mere man shall,
 And stand confessed as the God of salvation!
 Meantime, in the still recurring fear
 Lest myself, at unawares, be found,
 While attacking the choice of my neighbours round,
 Without my own made—I choose here!
 The giving out of the hymn reclaims me;
 I have done!—And if any blames me,
 Thinking that merely to touch in brevity
 The topics I dwell on, were unlawful,—
 Or, worse, that I trench, with undue levity,
 On the bounds of the Holy and the awful,
 I praise the heart, and pity the head of him,
 And refer myself to THEE, instead of him;
 Who head and heart alike discernest,
 Looking below light speech we utter,
 When the frothy spume and frequent sputter
 Prove that the soul's depths boil in earnest!
 May the truth shine out, stand ever before us!
 I put up pencil and join chorus
 To Hepzibah Tune, without further apology,
 The last five verses of the third section
 Of the seventeenth hymn in Whitfield's Collection,
 To conclude with the doxology.'

Quotations so simple as these will assure our readers that in Mr. Browning they may expect to meet with a man who has meddled with every kind of knowledge. Far beyond any other poet, we believe, of our day, all his poems deserve the name of studies, and his volumes form a rich mosaic. In this amplitude of knowledge, perhaps, the poet Longfellow more resembles him than any other; but we suppose, as we believe some one has said, there is the material of many Longfellow's. Pity, too, that a writer so gifted and

faithful to our purest and highest instincts, many of whose verses, too, show such richness of melody, should not have cultivated more the charm of that music which wins, as well as that power which subdues and overawes. Yet how ungrateful this is : as well murmur because Milton has not cut up 'Paradise Lost' into pretty little liltings of song. We are impatient because our Milton cannot be a Burns as well, and public opinion, being well pleased with 'Paradise Lost,' would thereupon give its gifted author an order for the production of something in the Christy's Minstrels way, the poor author meantime feeling that the production of the one article was scarcely compatible with the production of the other. We are not aware that any verse of Robert Browning's has been set to music. The same remark applies to the volumes of Mrs. Browning ; indeed, the verses of both the one and the other are too painful for a large popularity. And we remark again of Mr. Browning's poems, that they are characterised by exceeding painfulness—not the painfulness of passion—but that which, we believe, more frequently tortures to madness, the painfulness of thought. In all his more important efforts this is very manifest, and this manifestation would lead, perhaps, to a mistake with reference to the poet's character, which we conceive of as reticent and shy and shrinking ; while the tramp of logical firmness, as in 'Saul,' and 'Bishop Blougram's Apology,' and 'Paracelsus,' although in less a degree, and the overwhelming blaze of tropical passion, as in the 'Return of the Druses,' and especially that highest of all his dramatic efforts, 'Luria,' might give the appearance of an exceedingly easy and susceptible character. It is evident, however, that our author holds his thoughts, and many of them, in a leash at once, stands in the centre and surveys the round, and, in one word, seems beyond any other poet of our age ; while sometimes inferior to his loftier brethren in *music*, to be far beyond any in *light*, and if apparently not equal to them in the sharpness and definition of his imagination, to be beyond them, not only in his apprehension of the mystery, but his power to front it. While standing on the earth he seems able to wield most of any, words, towering to the infinite heights or depths of passion. Nor shall this article be closed without a reference to his inimitably musical verses to his gifted wife. With a few lines of it we will close :—

'What, there's nothing in the moon note-worthy ?
Nay—for if that moon could love a mortal,
Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy)
All her magic ('tis the old sweet mythos)
She would turn a new side to her mortal,
Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman—
Blank to Zoroaster on his terrace,

Blind to Galileo on his turret,
Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats—him, even!
Think, the wonder of the moonstruck mortal—
When she turns round, comes again in heaven,
Opens out anew for worse or better?
Proves she like some portent of an ice-berg
Swimming full upon the ship it founders,
Hungry with huge teeth of splintered chrystals?
Proves she as the paved-work of a sapphire
Seen by Moses when he climbed the mountain?
Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu
Climbed and saw the very God, the Highest,
Stand upon the paved-work of a sapphire.
Like the bodied heaven in his clearness
Shone the stone, the sapphire of that paved-work,
When they ate and drank and saw God also!

‘What were seen? None knows, none ever shall know.
Only this is sure—the sight were other,
Not the moon’s same side, born late in Florence,
Dying now impoverished here in London.
God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her.

‘This I say of me, but think of you, Love!
This to you—yourself my moon of poets!
Ah, but that’s the world’s side—there’s the wonder—
Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you.
There, in turn I stand with them and praise you,
Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.
But the best is when I glide from out them,
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
Come out on the other side, the novel
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

‘Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,
Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,
Wrote one song—and in my brain I sing it,
Drew one angel—borne, see, on my bosom!’

V.

GHOSTLY BUSINESS.*

MR. HOWITT himself, as the translator of 'Ennemoser's History of Magic,' gives to his readers the opportunity of knowing how largely he is indebted to the German writer for the production of the volumes before us. Modesty has never been an especial attribute of William Howitt; it is his way to treat with a marked discourtesy those from whom he differs: this is the great sin of his present work. With a great deal of information, derived from all sources of knowledge and history, embodying therefore much interesting statement and observation, and conveyed with Mr. Howitt's usual rapid and rather emotional than thoughtful force, there is a good deal of assumption, some narrowness, and frequently ignorance; we are bound also to say that the volumes are, upon the subjects to which they refer, a compendium of facts. Many, perhaps, will demur to the use of the term, fact; but it must go. There really are multitudes of things which we have to receive, and for the solution of which we have not yet discovered the law. The reading of the work of Ennemoser would perhaps supersede the necessity of referring to that of Mr. Howitt. Ennemoser's insight is far deeper; he writes less as a partisan; he abuses nobody; and without the latter quality, a work of Mr. Howitt's would scarcely be complete. With these qualifications, we may commend his books to those readers who are desirous of obtaining a bird's-eye view of the literature of spiritualism. We do not believe that it is quite so easy as Mr. Howitt seems to imagine, to spell the way to knowledge upon these matters; but we do think that the statements are so numerous, the reported facts so increasing and abounding, that they act very unphilosophically who simply sneer and deny; and we only regret that upon such a subject Mr. Howitt has not brought to bear a greater degree of spiritual calm. His volumes will create interest, but they are not likely to allay opposition or to secure conviction.

And we must say that we are glad to see any steady stand

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- * 1. *Incidents in my Life.* By D. D. Home. Longman & Co.
 2. *The History of the Supernatural in all Ages and Nations, and in all Churches, Christian and Pagan, demonstrating a Universal Faith.* By Wm. Howitt. Two Vols. Longman & Co.

made for supernatural facts. More and more the classes of the thoughtful seem to be dividing themselves into those who see nature and nothing more, and those who see nature as enclosed and enveloped in the supernatural. Bishop Butler expressed something like this in his well-known saying: 'There are two courses of nature—the ordinary and the extraordinary'; but efforts are being made now by noble men, who seem, however, to have little to command our admiration except their piercing insight into natural causation, to dispense with the supernatural altogether in the economy of the universe and human life. To such persons it seems absolutely necessary to ignore certain undoubted facts; they deal with the brick and mortar side of life. Man's terrestrial habitation seems to grow without hands; it never occurs to them to inquire much into the consciousness which presides over the use of their own. A million phenomena are constantly transpiring within and around them utterly inexplicable, and belonging as much to the order of the unusual and extraordinary; but they excite no interest in comparison with circumstances far inferior in interest and importance. Isaac Taylor has said in reference to the extraordinary instances of ghostly visitation (and no one will suspect him of great propensity to credulity), 'Once in a century, or not so often, on a summer's evening, a stray Arabian locust—a genuine son of the desert—has alighted in Hyde Park. This is out of the course of nature; it is a very difficult thing to account for, but it is actual, it is believable, it is not supernatural.' Why may we not believe that while spirits—we take a large thing for granted, our reader's perceive—are kept upon their good behaviour, and have no power to infringe upon the solid world, there are nevertheless chances or mischances which, in the cycles of time, throw some, like an Arabian locust, upon our shores, giving them the opportunity of disporting themselves, to our annoyance, amongst us for a season? All this, however, takes it for granted that there is a spiritual, say a *super-natural*, kingdom and world. This theory would not satisfy Mr. Howitt and his *confrères*; but we are not very particularly desirous to satisfy that race; for if the supernatural world be demonstrated to the senses of the vision and the understanding, and if it were clearly possible at will to enter it and to obtain answers from it, we should still feel and maintain that God and Providence had so fixed the limitations of our visible diurnal sphere that beyond them it would be impiety to seek to pass excepting in the way of faith and prayer. But we think there is a great deal to be said for the locust, whatever the reader may feel, however the lip may curl, and the sense steel itself against the matter. The literature of the super-

natural includes not only a large collection of books not exactly to be treated with contempt, but a number of names also standing a long way above contempt, and very high in the homage of enlightened minds. The testimony to the supernatural is certainly universal in latitude, and nation, and age, and temperament. 'The spiritual power,' says William Howitt, 'is the *lex magna* of the universe.' Certainly, in some way, it is so; and nature, sufficiently inexplicable in herself, becomes a millionfold more inexplicable without the law beneath and above nature. Even Comte admits that we know nothing of the sources or causes of nature's laws. He deems their origination so inscrutable that it is a waste of time to inquire into them, and regards the idea of a deity as a mere abstraction, tending to comfort ignoramuses until liberated into the light of science. And what comfort then? Meantime it will be perceived that this is the mere assumption of an atheistic mind, choosing to knock away in imagination the prop from beneath the universe, not from any idea that another law of causation has been discovered, but simply because atheistic intelligence does not choose to recognise the invisible and divine. Was it not said of old, 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God'? But on all sides those who choose to deny the existence of the kingdom of spirits, and that it presses irresistibly upon the frontier of human nature, have much to account for. Surely Mr. Howitt's volumes furnish a very marvellous chapter in the history of the human mind. Are all seers impostors? Are they all knaves? all liars? all idiots? Very summary this; but even then hardly satisfactory. Collusion, illusion, delusion! But what is this human mind, this haunted chamber, that can be imposed on thus? Supposing this kingdom of spirit to have no objective existence, their subjective is scarcely less a marvel—all ideal, idealogical dreams giving birth to vast drifts of ghosts flocking solemn and sable shores. The thing in the conception is scarcely less marvellous than the thing in existence. Here, while what our writer calls 'large-wigged science' shakes its bushy, disbelieving horse-hair, what are we to think of Swedenborg, who constructs a vast science of ghosts, and goes in and out amongst them at pleasure? Do so ungracious a thing as call *him* liar, or describe the unhappy condition of blood bringing him into such scenery and circumstance; the mystery is no more solved. What are we to think of the miracles at the tomb of the Abbé de Paris? Their imposture is not nearly so satisfactorily proved as Bishop Douglas determined; and as Jesuitism, in its vehement anti-Jansenism proclaimed, If we cannot believe Count Montgérôw, whom then shall we believe? by what rule accept any history, or any biography?

Hundreds proclaimed their cure in the face of a large city and the observation of a not unintelligent age. It is easy to disbelieve. What are we to think of Madame Hauffe, better known as the Seeress of Prevorst. The instance we suppose is far beyond doubt; but it is abnormal: very certainly. So is toothache very painfully abnormal; but a good many people have it. To the strong-nerved and gifted individual who never experienced that pleasant titillation of the nerves, it might seem an altogether incredible thing that a piece of mere bone should possess the power to drive mind and body almost to madness. It is one of the pleasant peculiarities of this our mortal condition, that we who have not felt a peculiar kind of pain cannot conceive that pain; but it would be rather ungenerous and unjust, in the absence of our own experience, to assail and ridicule the experiences of others. We have no doubt about the abnormal condition of those supposed to be susceptible to visions, and dreams, and spiritual manifestations; but we do not at all suppose, therefore, that it follows that the whole thing is merely an affair of the blood and the brain. It seems certain—nay, it is very certain—that there are agents of various kinds capable to superinduce that abnormal condition of body, giving to it unnatural susceptibilities. We are constantly using nervine things—doing this, in a measure—such as tobacco or tea. Those who prefer the higher luxuries and diseases of imagination proceed to the intoxication of opium; while others, again, throw themselves into the ecstasies of hashish or napellus. That which in these cases is superinduced by the intoxicating draught may possibly be the ordinary—may we say the diseased ordinary—condition, which some temperaments have upon them as a doom. We are no ghost-seers or table-rappers. Our instincts go as utterly against the practice as their faith turns to the possibility of many such manifestations. Meantime, those who believe themselves to be brought into contact immediately with the spiritual world can scarcely expect their statements to be received without rigid examination. If spiritual appearances be possible, so also is imposture. No doubt apparitions and voices, even to give the largest amount of credence to their possibility, are, most happily, very unusual. There are also natures to whom, from their very healthiness, as well as others from their unhealthiness, it may be difficult to believe; and we quite think that such deserve a more candid treatment than they have received from William Howitt in the book which furnishes the text for our present thoughts.

Into the supposed various ranks and orders of spiritual existences surrounding man, the allocation of malignant or celestial agencies in his lot or sphere, it would be idle enough

to enter, upon this page. The tendency of our remarks points very little further than to a plea for fairness. We have asserted that man believes in nature and the natural. In our day we have obtained an almost unhealthy command over the forces and powers of nature. So much is this the case that we observe and use, and believe in little more than dynamical force. Hence Mr. Home's book is not likely to receive very fair treatment. The first sentence of an eminent contemporary reviewer denounces it as an impudent and foolish book. If it be this, it is a million-fold worse than this. But impudent, in the usual sense of that word, it can scarcely be called, and we think at least it may claim a suspended judgment. We surely may say, Mr. Home looks better in his book than many of his reviewers in their articles. We see no impudence, unless the whole affair be a lie. The style is that of quiet narrative, wonderful enough in what it relates, but wholly and singularly devoid of all pretentiousness of style. And certainly, on all hands, the dilemmas to which he reduces able scientific sceptics are remarkable enough. Crusty Sir David Brewster is present at the moving of the great table, but declares he did not know whether it moved or not! Determined, however, that 'spirit was the last thing he would give in to,' to quote his own words, he exclaims to the more cautious and apparently philosophical Lord Brougham, who was also present, 'Sir, this upsets the philosophy of fifty years!' Amidst these complimentary sayings, one cannot but, with Mr. Home, indulge in a laugh at the man of science who does not know whether a table moves or not before his own eyes, and conjectures that what was done was produced by machinery attached to the lower extremities of Mr. Home! Sir David Brewster's letter, we venture to think, will produce no sceptics. And nothing is more amusing and remarkable than the vast variety of expedients appealed to in order to account for the mysterious noises or manifestations.

'Some instances of the manner in which it is said the phenomena are produced are sufficiently amusing to be repeated. A very popular idea in Paris was that I carried in my pocket a tame monkey trained to assist me. Another is that my legs are so formed as to be capable of elongation, and that my feet are like those of a baboon. Many people suppose that when I go to a strange house, my tables have to be sent first, and that, like Sir David Brewster's "conjectural" table, they are always copiously draped, and that I take with me wax hands and arms to show at the proper moment. Some suppose that I magnetize or biologize my audience, and that they only imagine they see what they see. Some that I carry with me lazy tongs and a magic lantern, and others have stated that when I am said to rise in the air, it is only a balloon filled with gas in the shape of a man. Others

again will have it that it is done by a magic lantern, whilst some doctors declare that I administer "a thimbleful of chloroform to each of the sitters." Sir David Brewster must have had his thimbleful when he could only say that the table "appeared to rise," and that "spirits were the last things he would give in to." Some have enough spiritual belief to say that I have the devil at command. Others that I raise spirits by forms and incantations. Then we have involuntary muscular motion to account for the phenomena by the learned Professor Faraday. Dr. Carpenter speaks of their being produced by unconscious cerebration, and Mr. Morell, the philosopher, tells us that they are caused by "the reflex action of the mind." A common explanation is ventriloquism. Electricity is another, and it is said that I have an electric battery concealed about my person. Then there are the od force and fluid action, and the nervous principle, and collusion, illusion and delusion. Mechanical contrivances attached to the lower extremities are also suggested by Sir David Brewster, but without specifying their particular nature. But the most scientific and learned explanation, leaving no room for conjectures, was given by an old woman in America, who when asked if she could account for what she had seen, replied, "Lor, Sirs, it's easy enough, he only rubs himself all over with a gold pencil." The rappings are produced in many ways, each philosopher having his own theory, beginning low down with the snapping of the toe-joints, others getting up to the ancle, whilst some maintain it to be in the knees, or thigh bones. Professor Huxley has his own "spirit-rapping toe" with which he amuses his friends. It has even been attributed to a strong beating of my pulse. Some say I rub my boots together, others my thumb nails, and that springs are concealed in the table and about the room. It has been said that I have an electrical quality which I can throw off at the command of my will. A general belief is that I bribe the servants at whatever house I visit, that they may aid me in concealing my machinery. The intelligence displayed in obtaining names, dates, and other circumstances, is previously communicated to me either by my own inquiry from servants, or by visiting the tombstones of the relatives, or even by a body of secret police who are in my pay. Others know that I am clairvoyant, and that I read the thoughts of those present. I am an accomplished juggler according to others, and have always refused to be seen by any others of the craft, although the fact is quite the contrary, and the greatest juggler of France has stated that he could not at all account for what he witnessed by any of the principles of his art.'

We are disposed to regard Mr. Home's book, supposing it to be truthful—which, in the main, we really see no reason at all to doubt, in so far as he is concerned—as a philosophical treatise. Its place on the book-shelf is by the side of the 'Seeress of Prevorst.' We, perhaps, should scarcely be disposed to assign him the place accorded by Mr. Howitt, who regards him as a very apostle! It is, no doubt, one of the most suspicious circumstances connected with Mr. Home, that he

comes from America. He is, however, an Englishman by birth, and appears to be respectable in all his relationships in life. Mr. Howitt believes his mission to be to go forth and do the preliminary work of restoring faith by the performance of outward marvels. By birth he is connected with the Homes of Scotland. From the earliest period of his life, he informs us, he has been the subject of spiritual visitations, and was very early turned out of doors for his alleged acquaintance with ghosts. In his first years he was a Congregationalist, and when his aunt sent for three ministers to exorcise the devil from him—Congregationalist, Baptist, and Wesleyan—the Congregationalist alone would not enter into the subject, saying, 'He saw no reason why a pure-minded boy should be persecuted for what he was not responsible to prevent or cause.' We must regard his volume as to us more curious than pleasant. So far as we have read it, we have not felt any absorbing interest in it; while, at the same time, it does illustrate, we think, the permeation of natural phenomena by supernatural forces and laws; illustrating, also, that the author—which is the really interesting part of the matter—has himself some remarkable and diseased idiosyncrasy of body, rendering him, without any necessity of falling upon the idea of collusion, as, if we may so define him, a kind of spiritual battery. He has successfully imposed, if he has imposed, upon the highest courts of Europe. The Emperor of Russia, the Emperor of France, the King of Holland—by all these princes, and by others, he has been entertained as a guest, and without falling upon the insolence of a charge of deceit, which really would be itself almost miraculous in an age like this, of the hardest scepticism to spiritual, and the most enslaved belief in natural laws; may we not charitably suppose that he is thus pointing to the more occult, but not less certain, indications of the life abounding and overflowing behind the veil? And certainly those who so petulantly and persistently deny the truthfulness of Mr. Home, to be consistent, should deal in the same manner with more eminent men. What are we to say of Luther's constant intercourse with the devil? his perpetual environment by visions and spiritual things—not only himself, but his household? His good wife Catherine had her visions as well as he, though Mr. Howitt strangely misquotes some particulars, and has especially turned his letter to the Chancellor Bruck, in which he recites the vision of the 'Rainbow and the Cloud' into a real vision. The scorn and utter contempt with which Mr. Home is treated would rise to mad virulence and vehemence did we hear any one in our day speaking as Luther spoke. The poor, vexed, glorious, spiritual Titan, saw devils in everything, and was fighting with them everywhere. Ludi-

crous and contemptible indeed it would seem to the nature-lovers and worshippers. 'Many devils,' said he, 'are in woods, waters, and wildernesses, in dark poolly places, ready to hurt and prejudice people.' He saw devils in the thick black clouds, the hail, the lightnings, and the thunderings. 'When these things happen,' said he, 'the philosophers say it is natural, and ascribe it to the planets; but I see the devil puffing out his cheeks against the light, but the good Lord Christ gave him a blow upon his inflated cheek, and still combats him vigorously, and will to the end of things.' One day when there was a storm abroad, 'Hark!' said he, 'how the devil is puffing and blowing; it is the devil who does this; the winds are good or bad spirits.' Often he seemed to be personally near to the arch enemy, sometimes in noises and sometimes in visions. What shall we make of this? Certainly we may make this of it—that if Luther were honest, Mr. Home may be so too. In that age, of course, we know it will be said the superstitions of the world and of the Church were manifold. But has Protestantism reached a perfect state of health in entirely ignoring all these? Have we not reached another state of disease? and whereas our fathers in those ancient ages beheld everything as ghostly and weird, have we improved by beholding nothing ghostly or spiritual? Certainly, again, those who think it possible that the locust may sometimes come to Hyde Park, find themselves in good company with Melancthon, with Wishart, with Knox and Latimer, with Sir Thomas Brown, with Drs. Watts and Doddridge, with Robert Barclay and John Wesley, with Whitfield and Dr. Johnson, and Robert Southey, and multitudes besides; with perhaps all the wise and quiet, who—while they desire no immediate manifestations to themselves, avail themselves of all the strength and intelligence nature can give, but feel that behind the veil of nature there is a mystery of life and not of death—humbly suspend their judgment as to how such things can be; but, with Dr. Watts, believe, that in the midst of much mistake, and perhaps imposition, it is impossible all the stories in Glanville or in Baxter can be altogether unfounded; for the quieter the heart is the shrewder the eye is, and there is a prescience deeper than that which sees into fossils and stones, or even into laws and modes of being; and we regard him as a true benefactor to our race who, by placing existence in the full light of the spiritual world, places it also beneath the range of the highest order of motives. It was quite to be expected that an age like ours, rife in transcendentalism, should produce a faith in higher forms and principles than those acknowledged by cold, lifeless sensationalism. Protestantism, in its reaction against Papal imposture, has travelled

a little too far, and has in some minds substituted simple Sadduceism ; and our feeling and dread is, that in many of our churches, and amongst many of our teachers, that faith and doctrine is simply taught which believes and sees no angel, and no spirit, and no resurrection. We are far enough, too, from supposing that spiritual existences are to be constantly seen with the eye of sense, as interposing and meddling with human affairs ; but, on the contrary, we would not have it supposed that it is essential to a sound and healthy faith in Christianity, that they occupy a region altogether distant and unsympathetic with ours, that they have no interest in our affairs, or that to us they cease to exist, and therefore we are glad of anything that meets the subject of the supernatural, and keeps it awake as a faith in the mind and in the Church.

We trust that none of our readers will understand us as endorsing the *séances* of modern spiritualism, or even as in any special sense becoming the champions of Mr. Home's book. We should scarcely have devoted the space to this article but for the very obvious unfairness in every review of the book we have had an opportunity of reading. There are plenty of weak points, too, and especially if it be in this case, as the *Saturday Review* has asserted with reference to the Archimago of spiritualism, 'that ridicule is the test of truth.' That is a law that does not invariably hold good. Vaccination and the steam-engine were alike greeted with showers of ridicule ; the fencing-off disease by the matter from a cow, and the moving vast ships through the water without oars or sails, seemed fine subjects for ridicule. There is plenty of scope for ridicule, too, in this ghostly business, and the levitation of Mr. Home ; the spectacle of a man swimming about in an unearthly fashion in the middle of the room, and fair ghostly arms, and wreaths, and music played by invisible fingers, and echoing cracks and raps on the walls and beneath the tables, and messages from dead friends, and handwriting stamped by invisible presences—all this, no doubt, is very funny, and fair game it seems for ridicule. For our own part, we have left off wondering at anything ; nor is there much that really strikes us as more marvellous, with our notions of what the spiritual world is, in this than in the illusions of a stereoscope, or the likeness we carry in our pocket painted by the light, or the message we send five hundred miles distant by the fingers of the lightning. Some, perhaps, might say that we have touched so extreme a point in the kingdom of nature, that we have reached the lowest stair of the kingdom of spirit. For ourselves, we are not particularly curious about it ; with all the darkness we share in common with our race about the mystery of both worlds, we never regard ourselves as separated far from the sphere of spirit, and while

we have no desire to lift the curtain till it shall be lifted for us by God's cheerful angel of death, we put in a plea against the sceptical view of the nature of man. There may be much in manifestations like those of which we read to provoke a sneer, but even the ludicrous aspects, as they strike us, may be only the sweep and eddy of spiritual forces. Many things in embryo look grotesque, which completed and clothed look divine, and we do not hesitate to include ourselves among the number of those who at present prefer waiting to dogmatising.

VI.

KIRKUS' ESSAYS.*

ASSUREDLY we may give to Mr. Kirkus the praise of considerable courage; he has uttered in this volume things which will be regarded as unmistakably heretical, and it ought to be conceded to such a man that while the orthodox lose nothing by the publication of their orthodoxy, the heretical have nothing to gain, and everything to lose, by the publication of their little mental disturbances; and we cannot but feel that pity 'tis that nowadays, whenever a man's internal village is in an uproar, he should feel the burden laid upon him of rushing into a loud public speech, or public print, to proclaim, as far as his voice or pen can reach, the circumstance. Mr. Kirkus is a cultivated and thoughtful man, but he has been scarcely faithful to the principles of his own culture; he conceives himself to be much wider than in reality he is, in fact, his views are singularly wanting in breadth; they have not largeness and grasp; hence he is much more happy when he is pulling some little sin by the nose, or pointing to some flaw possible or actual, either in a great character or a great system, than when attempting to comprehend or to expound that which is really worthy of comprehension or exposition. Thus we admire his happy little characterization of the Plymouth Brethren:—

‘Out of the Established Church, “evangelicalism” attains its perfect development among the Plymouth Brethren. Among these amiable sectaries, one man or woman is as able to expound his or her little dog's-eared Testament as any other could be. When the Holy Ghost is given to everybody in just the same way, and for just the

* *Miscellaneous Essays, Critical and Theological.* By Rev. WILLIAM KIRKUS, LL.B. Longman & Co.

same purposes, when in fact every member of the body has been turned into a tongue, it is quite plain that there is no room for a clergy. Therefore the Plymouth Brethren have no clergy. Undoubtedly, through the infirmities of human nature, some dear brethren are dearer and sweeter than the rest; but they are not "ministers"—they stand on the same level with those whom they humbly endeavour to edify. And almost every Dissenting sect, excepting perhaps the Wesleyan Methodists, has been annoyed and brought into confusion by the Plymouth Brethren; whose vocation seems to be not to convert the world, but to convert the converted. They do not go into highways and hedges, to compel men to come in to the feast of the Gospel; but they hire a room opposite some church or chapel, and paint up on a board that the Gospel of the grace of God will be preached there, for the benefit of those benighted Christians who have not yet arrived at the perfection of anarchy.'

At the same time, we regard the paper in which this occurs, on 'Evangelicalism,' as singularly one-sided and unfair. He has also thrown away an admirable opportunity for a clear statement and analysis of the theory and development of Evangelicalism. Evangelical has come to be a term almost as nauseous to us as to Mr. Kirkus. There are, no doubt, features in its modern manifestation essentially repulsive, and the cool audacity with which the Evangelical party, so called, especially of the Church of England, appropriates to itself all the blessings and merits of salvation and of Church ordinances is ludicrous enough, but the Essay of Mr. Kirkus is singularly warped, as a statement of what Evangelicalism is, while he has given to it the further merit of an utter hatred of all those doctrines, which in the literal and larger sense, are Evangelical. Surely a paragraph like this, Mr. Kirkus must know to be wholly beside his experience of published Evangelical doctrine :—

'But there is no room in "evangelicalism" for an ever developing humanity. The whole past, outside of Judaism, is condemned by that gloomy system as lacking the condition of saving faith. The whole future is bounded by the "evangelical" interpretation of the Bible. The utmost possibility for humanity is that it should become "evangelical!" This therefore is the aim of all "evangelical" missionaries. They have, in their own judgment, everything to give, nothing to receive. They go not to fulfil but to destroy. They do not recognise that the heathen have been ignorantly worshipping Him whom they themselves declare. It does not occur to them as even possible that Indian and Chinese philosophy and civilization may be able to add some valuable elements to European philosophy and civilization, though these include Christianity. Their heart is not only stirred within them when they see cities wholly given to idolatry, but they are unable to perceive in this a Divine purpose, the patient education of men by God. They little dream that God

"hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of men's habitations, *that they should seek the Lord,*" who is not far from every one of them. For "evangelicalism" there is no human race, no "one body and members in particular." Of *humanity*, it can only despair.'

The temper of Mr. Kirkus' mind is, in the first place, to put himself upon bad terms with any particular matter at which he intends to look. We conceive him as saying, 'There is sure to be something here with which I can quarrel and disagree; what is it?' A temper of mind this always unhealthy, and admirably fitted for bringing a man acquainted with a good many falsehoods; scarcely that which will do the more important thing for him—make him acquainted with the greater truths; thus his treatment of Dr. Watts we must hold to be highly disingenuous. He implies that 'most of Dr. Watts's hymns are doggerel,' and we regard his citations as fairly rendered as would be a page of selections from the conceits of the 'Comedy of Errors' for the purpose of illustrating and traducing the genius of Shakspeare, or a selection from Milton's 'Paraphrases of the Psalms' for the purpose of condemning as impoverished the mind of the author of the 'Paradise Lost.' We do not intend, therefore, to charge upon Mr. Kirkus untruthfulness. A man who could dare to publish, as he has dared, is not likely to deserve that implication, although it is very possible to fall into it unconsciously; and if Mr. Kirkus does so, it arises from that perpetual querulousness of temper which prompts him rather to feel and manipulate the little errors and shortcomings of men than reverently to regard their truth and their greatness. We say these things with a considerable measure of regret, and should have been inclined to have expressed ourselves more reticently; but Mr. Kirkus will remember that he himself guides the way to a rather severe handling of those from whom we differ. His mode of dealing with preaching and preachers is not generous; it is not even just; yet he is a preacher himself, and to a great many, in whose warm affections he lives, a very acceptable one. Why must he believe that all preachers, to be honest and true, should follow his type? We confess that we are ourselves utterly wearied with the comparisons indulged in by many writers like Mr. Kirkus, of the wide distinction between the impoverished preaching of the present age and the wealth and fulness of preceding ages. Here is a paragraph. After expressing a conviction that preaching is as useless 'as the old office for the consecration of cramp-rings,' and describing the sermons in the 'Penny Pulpit' in the language of the fool to the discrowned Lear, 'I'd rather be any kind of thing than a fool, and yet I would not be thee, nuncle. I'm a fool, thou'rt nothing'

—this is the way Mr. Kirkus settles pew and pulpit—he then proceeds to the following pleasant and amiable paragraph :—

‘Average preachers, and preachers below the average, are to their lay friends a very difficult and amusing problem. *At home*, they are often really pleasant companions, witty, well-informed, not by any means fools, nor densely ignorant of the commonest experiences of life. But the laity complain that they no sooner put on the gown, and expose themselves to the magical effects of the pulpit, than their whole nature is suddenly revolutionized. They become the slowest and stupidest of human beings. They talk about life as if they had never been outside the nursery. They vainly imagine, or seem to imagine, that people in church will be deeply interested in platitudes which they would blush to utter at their own dining-tables. The subjects about which they discourse, and their manner of dealing with them, are alike remote from common life.’

It is very well to cry up the eloquence of Latimer, as Mr. Kirkus does—naturally and excellently well; but we think he might have magnified his office in the recollection that the pulpit of our time has such *fools* as Robertson, of Brighton, and Frederick Maurice, and Caird, and Guthrie, and Ward Beecher, and Punshon, and George Dawson, and Binney, and Samuel Martin, and James Martineau, and Stowell Brown, and Spurgeon, and Thomas Jones, and a thousand besides. Surrounded every Sabbath and during the week by thousands of minds, influenced by them, and wrought upon for time and eternity; these all belong to Mr. Kirkus’ order of ‘fools.’ So far from yielding to the pleasant charges endlessly preferred by our writer, coincidently with Saturday reviewers, and such bad fish, we believe the pulpit was never a mightier battery than it is now for good, and never so crowded with really powerful men. Mr. Kirkus himself is also one of these ‘fools.’ We have no doubt that, possessed as he is of too fastidious and finical a spirit, he fronts the duties of his ministry with a conscience equal to that of any one of his brethren. The gravest charge he brings against preachers is, that they dare not have an independent judgment about the canon of Scripture, the atonement, and the future state; and that ‘they dare not examine for themselves the foundation of truths they are called upon to preach.’ Our experience is a very different one. Our circle of ministerial acquaintance is tolerably large, and we know few who have not most painfully interrogated for themselves. He is a most quarrelsome and uncomfortable brother, this writer. But there, we weary of fault-finding, and especially of a man of whom we would wish to speak admiringly and affectionately. The volume is not filled with such matters as those to which we have taken exception. Pity that the author thought it necessary to include

these things amongst his essays. He is fond of glancing into the heart of literary things and matters; and although he denounces the 'dishonesty of cowardice and reticence' in matters of religion, and seems strangely attracted to the exposition to contempt of 'pulpit fortune-tellers,' like Dr. Cumming, whom this book utterly expugnates and destroys, and routs from the face of the earth, we had rather he had occupied the volume with such essays as the beautiful one on 'True Womanliness;' in reading which, however, we should again be likely to take up a dispute with the author. Yet in this essay we think we see the proper province and work of the writer. There is a quiet, gentle, teachful, and pleasant insight and oversight about the paper. There being nothing very especially exciting the irritability of the author, he writes on in a happy vein, first depicting the difference between the woman of the old Athenic and the modern Christian world, and then through woman in the Christian state reaching out beyond the sad imperfections of our social life to the ideal which woman may, as wife and mother, hope to attain. The remarks on the ideal woman are very beautiful, and very beautiful especially the remark, that 'the honour of virginity is not easily separated from the honour of the wife and the mother.'

We have quoted several passages in condemnation, it is but fair we quote a passage in praise:—

THE MARRIAGE OF TRUE MINDS.

'Still, little as it may be recognised, the sin against freedom, nature, truth, confiding affection, always punishes itself. Men who have been taught that they may never act easily and frankly towards a lady without the suspicion of wrong intentions, or the stigma of effeminacy and oddness, will never make good husbands. They are males, not men. They dislike, or at least half contemptuously tolerate, all that is graceful and womanly even in their own wives. They care for nothing but business and politics, or, at any rate, they assume that their wives cannot have an opinion worth listening to on any subject which absorbs their own attention. Such notions, in their complete extravagance and fullest expression, may be heard from miserable puppies, who are scarcely worthy to cut the leaves of the books their sisters read, or mend the pens with which they write. A man will never be happy if his wife suspects him; a woman will never be happy if her husband despises her. They cannot be truly happy, only not *unhappy*, if their lives move in totally different pursuits, and have no point of union; if business, politics, literature, are a mere mystery to the woman; if house, children, servants, are little better than a bore to the man.

'Yet, while many marriages are dissolved by vice, embittered by cruelty, or flattened into the dullest tameness by the spiritual and intellectual poverty which can never suffice for their demands, there

may be much less unhappiness even in very unfavourable circumstances than would be believed without experience. If husbands and wives will refuse to hinder when they cannot help, if they will abstain from emptying the hearts and homes they cannot wholly fill, if they will do their duties and cease their vexatious exactions, if they will cast away all suspicion and jealousy, they may be happy with a happiness which will grow day by day. Confidence will justify itself, it will even produce the virtues which it assumes to exist already. Liberty will ensure loyalty, and be the mother of pure affection. The punctual and conscientious discharge of duties will create the feeling out of which it ought to flow. Friends and friendly intercourse will make up for defects which it is too late to remedy, and which will soon become unobserved; and the work for which each is best fitted will be an infallible cure for discontent. Many have thus lived happy lives who were far from being wholly suitable to each other, but they had wisdom to perceive how not to be wholly unsuitable. Still there is an ideal of matrimony, only by remembering which the real can be hallowed and ennobled. Each should be the complement of the other. There should be a perfect sympathy and trust; and each should find in the other that mystic charm which marks out the one as for the other—among all good the best, among all beautiful the fairest and loveliest. There is even a merciful deceitfulness in genuine love, a willingness to be deluded, a mere blindness, which can see no faults, and cannot help exaggerating all the merits of the beloved. Within due limits, not over narrow, who would have this changed? Lovers, married or unmarried, glorify each other with all their own ideals of perfect beauty and goodness, and when they are fairly matched, this is not so untrue as at first sight it appears. For they both possess the germs and rudiments of all the perfection they can imagine or desire; and true heroism is only manifested and not created by the circumstances which bring it to light. Virtues are not great, because of the greatness of the sphere in which they have to work. Unselfishness, courage, fidelity, the love of truth, are to be found in all ranks of life. The poor curate who will not flatter or lie to change forty pounds a-year to sixty, is as brave as if for similar reasons he had refused a bishopric; the little shopkeeper who would rather be poor than tricky and dishonest is a true hero; and the wife who will cling to him unrepiningly in his poverty, and help him to maintain the glorious fight with temptation, is surely as honourable as the most illustrious Roman matron. Nor is it other than fitting that they should admire each other with a holy pride, and heartily believe in each other's nobleness.

The man who can write thus and think thus is not to be lightly esteemed. The other papers of the volume we must leave. Before doing so, however, as we perceive the author is receiving smart condemnation for his publication in many quarters, and as the volume is likely to be interesting to many of our readers, we will say, let all readers be honest with it. If Mr. Kirkus receive lashes sharp and heavy from whips not made

of *small cords*, one must suppose that he expected them, or he never would have published his volume. When a writer puts himself in boxing attitude, it is not wonderful if other writers take up the gloves. And he is in an anomalous position. He regrets his position as a Dissenter, which cuts him off from the use of the Book of Common Prayer. He cannot enter the Establishment, yet probably he is, as a public teacher, very near to the centre of Mr. Maurice; and inasmuch as he charges with impudent dishonesty the critics who in their strictures declare they do not understand the meaning of Mr. Maurice's books, let us say to him what a service he would have rendered had he assisted us to understand them. We confess ourselves to be amongst the number of those who have no sympathy with what we suppose are the views of Mr. Maurice; but Mr. Kirkus knows very well that all the views of that influential writer are presented through such a golden haze of mystical, illogical, indeterminate, and unsystematized expression, that a critic may yet review and doubt all the time whether he have his eel without exposing himself to such very severe scorn as that which Mr. Kirkus indulges. But again we say, let each reader be just. We have implied that there is a shrill, virago kind of tone in the book which will, in many estimations, carry more apparent than real bitterness and hostility. Many a Lancashire wife asks you in to a cup of tea, or a bit of supper, in as amiable a voice and manner as if she rather were for kicking you out of doors; but her will is none the less good towards you; it is the fault of her downright Anglican or Norse blood and temperament; she blesses you in the same accent with which others curse you. And the volume before us might have been valuable but that the author has, in the first place, chosen to express himself in terms of shrill harshness, and, in the next, has taken upon himself, we believe, to descant upon some matters which we do not think he sees very clearly, and demanding philosophic treatment, in very unphilosophic temper and tone. At the same time, we must remember that even Evangelicalism has its vices and its sins; and the Church of the present day is not draped in so spotless an attire that no crease nor soil can be seen upon the vestment; and those of us who are very good, perfectly sound in the faith, having coasted all the shores of truth, taken the soundings of all its seas, and rested and anchored in all its havens, from time to time—if we feel that over our shoulders too is thrown at the end of our voyagings and wanderings even now the fine linen, clean and white, showing that *we*, at any rate, have the righteousness of the saints, we shall best serve the truth we, of course, have found by meeting Mr. Kirkus' assaults with courtesy, and his rather rude projectiles of speech with temper.